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The Ideal Christian Life

By WM. H. NORTON

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Author of "Bible Talks to Young Christians," and "Bible
Talks on the New Life In Christ."

*"Man shall not live by bread alone, but
by every word of God."*—LUKE IV: 4.

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BY WILLIAM H. HORTON

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ADAMANT PUBLICATIONS, NEW YORK, N.Y.
1911

Dedicated to my dear wife

Emmie McKenzie Norton

For thirty-two years my true, faithful,
loving companion.

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BY

W. H. NORTON

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INTRODUCTION

The true ideal Christian life is not my ideal, nor yours; but God's ideal, as given in His Word. He has plainly taught what is possible in the Christian life and character, and the means by which these ends may be reached. He intends at last to present His people "holy and unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight;" and He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

All real Christians feel the need and desire for better Christian living. With Paul they realize that they are not yet perfect, and that they do many things they would not, and fail to do much they would; and because of this fact, some give up hope of ever living any better life.

Some seek to reach this better living by being good and doing good; and when they think they have succeeded, they have attained only to their own, and not to God's high and perfect ideal. A noted case of this kind is seen in the Pharisee, who went with the Publican into the temple to pray. He thanked God that he was doing more than the law required. He fasted twice a week, while the law commanded only once; and gave tithes of all he possessed, while the law required only of the increase. According to his own ideal he was doing more than God required; but in the eyes of Christ, he was only a hypocrite.

Others find their ideal in a deep spirituality. This is a great blessing when properly understood and fully realized. To be filled with love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, meekness, and all the other graces of the Spirit. Yet deep spirituality is not all of God's ideal Christian life as set forth in the Bible. It is to grow up into Christ in all things as Paul realized when he said: "For me to live is Christ." "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." To the extent Christ lives in us, and works through us, to that extent will our lives become ideal; and it is vain to expect this to any extent apart from obedience to the commands of Christ.

It is not my object in this book to set forth, and develop in detail, the conditions and fundamental principles underlying this life; but to manifest the results which follow from meeting these conditions. My hope is to influence others, by seeing these results, to use the same means, and live purer, truer Christian lives.

CHAPTER I.

Darkness and Light.

TOM HORNN was an infant when his father died, and his mother left her beautiful home and went with her two boys to live in the home of her parents. After a few years she married again; but soon found that she had made a fearful mistake, as her husband was an infidel, and by the habit of drink was fast becoming a drunkard. He was intensely selfish, and had no higher aims in life than to please himself and satisfy his carnal nature. He had a handsome face, and by his polished manners won the lovely widow's lonely heart.

For a time all went well in the beautiful home. The new husband was kind, and managed the farm with success, and tried to carry out his sacred promise to be a father to her two orphan boys. But his true character soon manifested itself in his disregard and contempt for all that is sacred, and by the foulest blasphemies concerning Christ and Christianity. Then his habit of drink manifested itself in seasons of drunkenness and total debauch.

The mother carried her boys back to her old home, and left them in the care of her parents, to save them from the moral polutions of her own. She never knew a happy hour after this. The joy of her life went out, the brightness faded from her eyes, and the glow of health from her cheeks. She had risked and lost all by marrying a man for whom she could have

no respect. Love died out, and as the days went by she faded as the leaves of autumn. Her husband went from bad to worse, and finally waked up out of a miserable debauch to find his wife a corpse. She died from grief and a broken heart.

No pen can describe the deep sorrow of the brothers that day as they stood by the coffin and looked the last time upon the loveliest face in all the world to them, and then saw the open grave receive and hide the most precious of all forms from their sight. They felt that all the brightness of earth had faded out of their lives; and that night as they lay weeping in each other's arms, Tom said: "Brother John, I want mother. I want to die and go to her in heaven. Jim said she has gone to a beautiful home in heaven, where father has been waiting for her, and that they will wait up there for us till we shall come. Oh, I do wish I could go to them right now."

His brother said: "Tom, if the Lord should let you die as you are now, you would not go to mother, for we are all sinners, and have done so much that is wrong, that if we die in our unbelief we will be lost. Mother was a Christian, and loved and trusted in Christ, and he took her to heaven; and we must trust Him too, if we would be saved."

By this time Tom was weeping bitterly, and their grandmother came to comfort them.

"Oh, I am such a sinner," said Tom, "and have done so much that I know is wrong, my heart is so bad! and I fear I shall die and be

lost forever! Then I can never go to heaven, nor be with the Lord, nor with my mother and father any more!"

Then in a low, sweet voice the grandmother said: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, should not perish but have eternal life; and His Son Jesus Christ came into the world and died for our sins; and if we love and trust in Him we shall be saved. Since God loved us while we were sinners and hated Him, and gave Christ to die for our sins, how much ought we to love Him!"

With tears of joy Tom said: "I do love Him as my Savior. While you were talking I felt love to Him coming into my heart. Do you love Jesus, brother, for dying for our sins, and saving us that we may be with Him in heaven where dear mother and father are now so happy?"

His brother answered: "Yes, I do love Him, and have loved Him for several years. I am so glad you have been brought to love and trust Him; for I have never been strong, and was afraid I should have to leave you and go home before you found the Savior. But I have prayed earnestly that I might not have to go till you were saved; and now I can go satisfied at any time the Lord sees fit to call me, since I know that you too are coming."

Tom asked why they might not both go home together? His brother said that his health had never been good, and had grown rapidly worse of late, and it could not be a

great while till he would have to go. He believed the Lord had some special work for Tom to do before he would be called home. The Lord had made him healthy and strong, and he would likely live to a good old age, and work for the Lord a long time. He would be glad to live and work for Christ too; but it was not the will of God that he should do it, and he would gladly go home and serve him in heaven whenever He should call him. He wanted Tom to pray every day for his stepfather's conversion. Sometimes he was happy in the belief that he would yet be saved.

Their grandmother talked and comforted them with the promises of the Lord. He would be a father to the fatherless, and was a Father in heaven to all who believe in Christ. He loves us as our own fathers love and pity us. He is able to protect, guide and help us, and has promised to be with us even unto death. We are weak, but His strength is made perfect in our weakness. Christ is our righteousness, and His precious blood cleanses us from all sin. He gives the Holy Spirit to lead and comfort us, and wants us to tell Him all our troubles.

Although Tom found peace with God through faith in Christ his heart was sad with a double sorrow. He saw his brother's health failing and his strength growing weaker every day, and when he thought of the time he would have to live without him, he would break down and weep in secret. On one of these occasions, when convulsed with grief,

his brother came and laid his hand upon his bowed head and said: "Poor sad child! I wish I could stay with you and help you do your work, but I am not strong enough. The Lord Jesus says He will be with you; and He also says: 'Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Go to Him when the burden is too heavy and tell Him all your sorrows, and He will bear them for you. When I first knew that I could live only a short while longer, it was a great sorrow to me; especially that I had to go and leave you alone. I wanted to stay with you far more than you can wish me to stay; for at that time you were not a Christian, and I feared that we might be separated forever. I brought my great sorrow to the Lord Jesus Christ, and He gave me rest by making me feel sure that you would be saved, and that He would stay closer to you all the time than I could be, and help you live and do His work, and you would lean upon Him as you could not upon me. Then it seemed that He told me how He loved, and had died for me, and forgiven all my sins and saved me; and was I unwilling to do and suffer His will? Then I prayed for grace. I went to Him with all my load of sorrow and He gave me rest. I was willing to go or stay, and felt sure it would be well with you. But do remember that He says, 'Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

Tom was still kneeling and he said with

feeling and deep gushing tears: "O, Lord Jesus, I come to Thee with my load of grief; I am so lonely with my mother gone, and my brother so soon to leave me, and the thought of staying here without him almost breaks my heart! Lord Jesus, I come to Thee with this burden, be pleased to give me rest." In the next breath he was thanking the Lord for help and rest. He rose from his knees with his face full of Christian joy, threw his arms about his brother and said, "The struggle is all over now! We will all be united in that glorious home above. I feel that Jesus is with me and by His help I shall be able to cheerfully bear, and faithfully do all things for Him."

His brother returned his embrace and said: "I am so happy! for now I can go in peace. You are saved by grace through faith, and know how to obtain help and strength in times of need. How thankful I am that I have been permitted to live to see this happy day! When I go home, do not think of me as lost to you, but only as gone before. Remember that all my pain is over, all my tears are wiped away, my trials and temptations are all passed, and I am strong and well, pure and holy, full of joy and gladness, serving the Lord in heaven, while you serve Him in the world. Think of the fullness of joy I have in the presence of our precious Saviour; and also the joy when I meet our loved mother and father and tell them that you are saved and are faithfully at work for the Lord!"

There were many of these sweet talks be-

tween the brothers during the days of waiting. Tom watched at his bedside, and cared for him as tenderly as a mother for her babe, when he grew too feeble to be any longer about the house. None but the softest and kindest tones were ever heard, and his slightest wish was heeded day or night. He would often read such passages from the Bible as his brother wished and when he was too weak or in too much pain for reading, Tom would repeat: "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and would hear a faint whisper, "Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; I have that peace."

He also quoted: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin;" and the same weak voice responded, "Precious blood of Jesus! Cleanseth us from all sin! How sweet to know that it is true; and what joy to realize that we are forgiven and washed whiter than snow by His precious blood." Then of the promises he said: "They are all so precious and true! His grace is sufficient! He has given me living grace, and he will give me dying grace when I need it."

At other times they talked of the better country where he was soon to go. The golden streets, the jasper walls, the sea of glass, the river of the water of life, the tree of life with its healing leaves, the Father's house of many mansions, the light of God's presence; but no subject afforded such pleasure as the thought of seeing the dear Saviour, who loved him and

died for him. To look into His face and realize the height and depth, length and breadth, and know His incomprehensible love, and feel his own heart expand with love more fully than he had ever yet experienced, would be heaven indeed. His old sinful nature would be left behind, and he be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, before the Lord in love, and be forever with the Lord in whose presence is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures forever more.

As the end drew near, for several days the pain gave way and Tom thought he was better and might yet be well; but his brother said, "No, I am almost home. Remember to pray for stepfather, and when he will hear you, tell him of Jesus and His power to save." When the end came, they had been talking about their stepfather's conversion, and had prayed for him; and he said, "Tell him that Jesus loves him and died for his sins, and offers to save him if he will only believe and trust Him." Then his face grew bright, illumined by a sweet smile, and giving Tom his hand he said: "The Lord Jesus Christ will be with you. Tell all the people of Jesus and His love and His power to save. Tell it to everybody, and then come home."

Tom sat in wonder and awe, and yet a fullness of peace filled his heart. He felt as though he had seen the gates of the celestial city swing wide open, and the glories of the heavenly home had shined upon his soul. Without a struggle his brother had gone up

triumphantly to his home in glory. He shed no tears; but was rather joyful at the thought of his happy welcome home, and his sweet freedom from loneliness, pain and sorrow. He felt from that time as if he had entered the Father's house with his brother and saw the Lord coming for him, and receiving him to himself. As he seemed to look into his Saviour's face he felt that he had never known half His love; and his soul thrilled with a deeper love than he had ever felt before.

He gave him up freely to be with Jesus, and was fully assured that his Lord would be with him. Heaven seemed so much nearer, and death had lost its terror; and he thought of his brother as having joyfully gone to live in a better home where he would join him when his work was finished.

They buried him by the side of his father and mother. Tom shed no tears at the grave; but told his grandmother not to weep, for his brother had gone with Jesus to live in the Father's beautiful home, and was now free from all pain and sorrow. He told her also that Jesus says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He had carried his burden to Christ, and had felt His great tender love and gracious strength comforting him, and filling his soul with peace and rest; and he comforted her by pointing to Christ and His words of love and grace.

Not long after this Tom's grandfather's health gave way, and he sold his farm and

went into a distant State to live with his son, and Tom went back to his old home to live with his stepfather. Here he was so lonely and homesick that it seemed his health would break down. He moved about as a shadow, or sat for hours in deep study with a hungry, wistful look on his face. He cared little for food, and his stepfather thought he would soon follow the others to the grave, and tried many expedients to divert his mind and interest him in life. He gave him a fine young horse and saddle, and required him to attend to many small details of the farm, but nothing would lift the cloud of gloom, nor revive his drooping spirits. His mind became in some measure diseased from being so much alone, and from intense desire for sympathy. The large silent house, the unbroken level country, and the tall spire like pines which, like the small cold stars, were lifted so far above that they left him in loneliness. The sighing of the pines would fill him with deep gloom. They seemed to whisper among themselves in an unknown and hidden language; and always seemed sad as they looked down upon him with a pity they could not express. He also wearied of doing the same things over every day and determined to fit himself for some other work in life, and leave the farm forever as soon as he was able. This motive moved him to bring out his old school books and begin a regular course of study.

As a last resort his stepfather put him behind the plough. For a while he followed the quick

steps of his young horse in a mechanical manner; but after awhile his appetite improved, and his step grew stronger, and he was left with the negro laborers and treated as though he was one of them.

During the years of farm labor, Jim, his own father's trusted servant, rendered him much service by protecting him from the other hands, and by telling him much of the true and noble lives of his father and mother. He told him of his father's Bible, which he had left for Tom; and he led him to learn the verses which his father had marked for him. Jim told him, that his father wanted him to read the marked places and feel that they told him what he wanted him to do.

From these passages he understood his father to say: "This Bible is the true Word of God; search it and learn all it says, and do as faithfully as you can all it says do, and be all it says be." In these passages he felt that his father was speaking to him the things he most wanted him to know and do; and he readily promised to try faithfully to do as he told him. Later on it occurred to him that his Father in heaven had told him in the Bible just the things which He wanted him to know and do; so on his knees he promised the Lord that he would study the Bible constantly to know all His words, and would faithfully try to live by them. He read his father's Bible much to Jim and a great deal more for himself.

He read that Christ says, "I will never leave

thee nor forsake thee," and he could confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me." He learned to realize that the Lord was with him, and manifesting Himself to him; and he heard Him say: "My peace I give unto you." "Let not your heart be troubled, Ye believe in God, believe also in me." From this time he took new interest in life, often repeating: "I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord."

He read that it is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," and determined by the Lord's help to live by the words of God; and in order to do this he began to read his father's Bible every day, and study carefully every thing it says do and be. In the New Testament he read over many times the sayings of Jesus that he might know clearly His words and commands and do them; and he held equally dear the writings of the apostles, as they were all given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He read that the Holy Spirit should take the things of Christ and show them unto us. He spent much of the time at noon and night in reading his Bible to know and do all that Jesus says; and this became the fixed habit of his life. As the years went by he became familiar with the words of God and governed his life by them. He believed God, and acted upon His word as true; and expected everything to be just as He said, and tried to live by every word of God.

CHAPTER II.

Trials And Triumphs.

Tom made slow progress at first even as he reviewed alone the studies he had already passed over, and had frequently to seek his stepfather's aid. To his great joy he found him ever ready to help, and would never accept any task till it was thoroughly mastered; and finally promised to send him to school when the winter vacation was over. Tom cared little for leaving the plough; for his physical strength and manly vigor were such that he seemed never to grow weary; but was happy in the thought of preparing himself for something better in life. He could never forget that the Lord had left him here to work for Him, and wanted to prepare himself for that work.

After a most thorough examination he was admitted into the most advanced class, and the teacher advised them to look close to their honors; for a boy who could follow the plough and keep up with a class, would be sure to wake them up when he had nothing to do but study. The class cared little for his progress, they were too indignant that a ploughboy should be admitted to their number. They were all the sons and daughters of the wealthy planters for many miles around; and resented the presence of Tom, because of his poverty, and they let no opportunity pass by which they were able to make him feel it. They thought by threats and abuse to drive him

from the school; but he had no intentions of giving up this opportunity for study.

He had schooled himself to a good degree of self control, and patiently endured many things, because he was making rapid progress and would continue at any cost. He read in his Bible, "Avenge not yourselves; for vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." He was trying to live by the Bible in all it said do, and it said, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." His patient endurance led many to think him a coward, and they became more abusive in their insults.

Tom had prepared him a rustic seat under some live oaks by the side of a limesink near the school house. Here he spent the noon reading his Bible and communing with God in prayer. When the trouble was too heavy for him he would carry it to Jesus and find rest. While praying here he remembered how the Lord delivered the giant into David's hands, and gave Sampson strength to conquer an army; but he prayed the Lord to help him as He did Daniel when He sent an angel to close the lions mouth, and kept the fire from burning the three Hebrews, prevented Baalam from cursing Israel, and hedged Job from the power of Satan; so he prayed the Lord to deliver him and not let his enemies triumph over him. He felt that he would be unable to bear any longer their abuse, and dreaded the results; and he prayed very earnestly for help and deliverance.

One day at noon a crowd had gathered at his shady retreat and were having no little fun because they had found him on his knees praying. Ben Small was his chief tormentor, and had boasted that he would beat Tom till he would be glad to leave the school; so today he attempted to make good his threat. But as he rushed upon him, Tom pushed him away with such force that he staggered to the edge of the limesink which gave way under him, and he fell to the bottom and was covered with mud and water. Here he found himself in close contact with several large moccasins. He was thoroughly frightened, and cried out for help. As quick as thought Tom took a long slender pole and handed an end to Ben, which he grasped in almost mortal fright, and was soon drawn from his perilous position, and sat pale and trembling on the ground.

When Ben's fright began to give way, he asked Tom what it was he said when he fell. He repeated: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Ben trembled again, and said: "Boys, those horrid serpents' eyes almost burned themselves into my brain; and if Tom had not come to my relief, I really think I should have died from fright." Then he apologized to Tom for all his unkind treatment, and asked him to be his friend. Tom took his offered hand and said: "I have always tried to be friendly with all the boys, and I shall be glad to have you as a real friend."

Ben said: "I am not fit to be your friend, but the best friendship I have shall be yours

forever. You have saved my life, when I was seeking to injure you; but if it is ever necessary I will protect your life with mine.' Tom thanked him and said it would be a pleasure for him to be a friend to him, and he would do all he could for his welfare and happiness.

When Ben and the other boys had gone, Tom turned to his Bible, but found himself in no frame of mind to read or pray. There seemed a kind of unholy exaltation in his heart. The thought of the expression on Ben's angry face, as he struck at him, stirred up a wave of fiery wrath within him that would not down at his bidding. He could hardly keep from laughing outright when he thought of the sudden change of expression on his face when the dirt gave way under his feet, and then the expression of horror when he saw the snakes. But Tom dared not laugh, because he remembered the Lord says: "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth, lest the Lord see it, and it displease Him."

Now as he thought of these things, he was troubled, and was filled with shame at the thought of displeasing the Lord, who had so graciously answered his prayer, by being glad at the fall of his enemy. He saw, too, that he did not feel right towards Ben, and remembered that the Lord says: "If ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses." While he had been badly wronged, the Lord had already

avenged him; and yet he had felt all this wrong in the sight of the Lord.

He was very sad, and tried hard in his unaided strength to forgive Ben and feel right towards him, but found himself utterly helpless. He could hardly endure the thought of him. When he remembered his filthy condition, covered with slimy mud, and then thought of his heart filled with selfish pride and murderous hate, a deep feeling of abhorrence passed over him.

In deep trouble he called upon the Lord for mercy, confessing his sins; but he found no relief. Then he remembered the Scripture, "Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;" and Tom prayed earnestly for Ben, that he might be forgiven all the wrongs he had done him, and that the Lord would grant him repentance and faith in Christ that he might be saved.

While he prayed he felt forgiveness coming into his heart, and all bitterness giving way. Then he prayed that his own sin might be forgiven, and that he might be able to love his enemies, to bless them that cursed him, and do good to them that hate and abuse him. When he arose from that season of prayer, he was happy in the peace of God, and the joy of sins forgiven. He was sorry for Ben and was determined to try to bring him to Christ, and to be a true friend.

The next noon Ben went with Tom to his retreat and shot the serpents which had so nearly frightened him into a spell of sickness.

As they drew them out dead, Tom said it was no wonder they produced so much terror in Ben, and it was only a good Providence that prevented them from doing him harm. Then he told him, as they sat together under the live-oaks, how he prayed for him that he might be saved.

Ben wondered how Tom could feel as he did; but when he looked into his face that day as he helped him out of trouble, he felt sure there was something in his life that was not in his own. He had looked death fully in the face, and saw that he was not fit to die. All the sins of the past seemed to rush up before his mind, and he felt that he must be viler in the sight of God than those hideous serpents were to him. The dread of death had been over him since that hour, and those horrid eyes seemed to glare at him through all his troubled sleep, and he was terrified all the time lest he should die and be lost. He was willing to give up all his sins and had tried to pray; but could find no relief.

Tom told him of Jesus, Who died for our sins, and invites us all to believe in Him and be saved. Ben said he was willing to give up all sin and trust in Christ, but was not able; so they kneeled together and Tom prayed that he might be able to give up all sin, and come to God through faith in Christ and obtain pardon and salvation. While they prayed Ben began to rejoice because the burden of sin was gone, he had peace with God, and felt the love of Christ in his heart; and he wanted

to live for Christ because He died for his sins and brought him to God.

Tom was filled with joy now, for he had a friend and brother in Christ, and he prevailed on him to bring his Bible and study with him. He found great pleasure in this new friendship, and they spent many profitable and happy hours together.

A new trouble came to Tom from his great difference, he found it impossible to recite a piece before the school. Every time he arose to say his piece he became greatly agitated and confused, and would choke up and have to take his seat in confusion. At this almost the entire school would break out in laughter, and even the large girls would shout in derision, "Ploughboy eloquence!"

After several failures he thoroughly prepared his piece and put all his will power into the effort, and then choked up and sat down in great confusion, amid a general roar of laughter. This failure meant much to him, as he had thought and prayed over it till he felt sure of success, and had made his greatest failure. He could hardly hold up his head and meet the class. But he noticed on Mae Allen's face a look of sympathy, and her eyes were moist while the others were laughing. The sight of her sympathy and tears almost took away his breath, and made his eyes fill up and run over the first time since his brother's death.

Mae's father was thought to be very rich, and she was well thought of in the school. Tom thought she was proud and had spoken to her

but few times; but when school was out, she waited to speak with him. As they met she said: "Tom, you can succeed in speaking yet, if you will only school yourself up to it. You have too low an estimate of yourself. You have a better mind than any in the school, and lead in character. If I were you, I would feel that I was better than anybody who depends only upon their father's wealth and some fine clothes to make them what they are. Father says we often fail because we think we can not succeed, and the Bible says, 'I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.' I know you have had enough to bear in this school to crush any spirit and will less firm and courageous than yours, but I am sure you can rise above the fear of such faces as these, if you will only remember what they are."

While speaking her face was bright with sympathy, and Tom was greatly moved and said: "Mae, I thank you for your kind, encouraging words. I thought it impossible to succeed, and had given up, but now I see the cause of my failure, I ought to be able to overcome it."

"I know you can," said Mae with great earnestness. "Father says that all who become great orators suffer from stage fright. You must study your piece so as to master the thought, and so enter into it that it will become your own; and you will forget yourself. I know you can succeed if you will try this plan; and it will make me so happy."

With a glad smile on his face Tom said:

"I see it now! and I just know I shall be able to succeed! I thank you so much for showing me this. The good Lord has answered my prayer, and given me a friend in my greatest need."

Mae said: "Tom, I am glad to help you, and am happy indeed if I am in any way the Lord's answer to your prayer; for then I know you will be sure to succeed."

As they separated Tom thought he had never seen a happier and a sweeter face than hers. He resolved that he would so live that he would be worthy of her friendship forever; and he would so master his piece that he would be in such perfect sympathy with every thought, that he would forget himself. He also wondered that he had never resented in his mind the assumed superiority of the class because of their wealth. He saw that in real mental and moral worth he was far superior to any of them; and he would rise above the fear of man. The very world seemed new, the friendship and sympathy of one true girl made him so happy that he forgot all the contempt of the unthinking class. It was a joy to live, and he would make his new friend happy by reaching the very highest success.

He took up his piece with a new inspiration and studied to know the meaning of every word, and catch the sense of every expression, and enter into the fullest sympathy with every sentiment, until he really knew the piece and it became a part of his own thoughts and feelings.

When he came before the school with it again he looked into faces full of impatient contempt; but the confidence and sympathy in Mae's face carried more courage to his heart than all the others could dampen. There was a slight tremble in his voice when he began, which quickly gave way, as he forgot himself in his perfect sympathy with the thoughts he uttered. They were so fully his own, and he so clearly expressed their sentiments that he caused his hearers to feel and thrill under their power. He seemed to have awakened unto a new life and to have become a new person. The pupils looked in blank astonishment from one to the other as they wiped the moisture from their unwilling eyes.

Mae said to him when they met: "Tom, you made me so happy today, and although I expected you to succeed, I was almost as much surprised as the others. How did you master the trouble so completely in so short a time?"

Tom said: "Mae, I am glad I pleased you. It was your advice and sympathy. I mastered its every thought, and my soul thrilled under it like the strings of a harp under the touch of a master's hand, and I was surprised at myself. You have been a true friend, and I want to prove myself worthy of your friendship."

Mae said: "Tom, you are worthy of my friendship, and I am glad to encourage and help you. I expect to be as proud of your friendship in real life as I am of your present success."

At the close of the school there was a con-

test in elocution for a medal, and all the country gathered to hear the speeches and enjoy the dinner supplied by the community. The day was perfect and the crowd was in real good spirits; but were growing weary when Mae rose to recite her piece. It was rendered so well that there was no doubt who would receive the medal. Then came Tom with his piece, and he held the crowd and moved them as by a mighty hidden power. Many were moved to tears, and so great was his power over the people that he returned to his seat during an entire and absolute silence. Soon, however, a faint noise was heard, which rose into a storm of applause. This was repeated over and over again with loud calls for Tom.

When he made his appearance Mae Allen stood by his side, with her hand lightly resting upon his arm. They acted a humorous and pathetic dialogue which they had practiced, and succeeded so well that the crowd were alternately convulsed with laughter and then moved to tears. This was a surprise to the school and was heartily enjoyed by all.

The committee gave the medal to Tom and Mae jointly, and when General Graves presented it with a pretty speech, Tom received it and returned their combined thanks; and then presented it to Mae, asking that she accept and wear it as a pledge of friendship between them. Then the stage was filled with friends speaking kind congratulations, and Tom found himself in Ben's strong arms and heard him saying: "I am proud of you, my friend; I did not

know it was in you." Then Mae introduced him to her parents, who greeted him with warmth and deep kindness.

The dinner was spread in the grove, and as Tom walked with Mae to the table, she said: "Tom, I am proud of you as my friend! and am so happy in your success! I wanted you to own and wear the medal. It really is yours, and I would be happier for you to wear it, than to wear it myself."

"No, Mae," said Tom, "you earned it. It was your friendship that stimulated me to try again, and do my best. If you will only keep and wear it with the promise that you will continue to be my friend, I shall be perfectly satisfied. I am alone in the world, and have no one to help me. Only wear it with the promise of your friendship and sympathy and I will be happy."

Mae replied in an earnest, happy voice: "I am glad to be your friend, and will wear the medal as a reminder that we are friends, and as a pledge that we may at all times and under all circumstances count on each other's friendship and sympathy, and that we will do all we can through life to help each other live true and successful lives."

Tom thanked her and promised to try to make his life worthy of her perpetual friendship, and that it would always be his greatest joy to do anything for her pleasure and help. He had lived alone since his loved ones had gone home, and had prayed the Lord to give him some true Christian friends to help him;

and now he was so happy in this answer to his prayer. He would be her truest friend as long as he lived, and seek to help her whenever he could.



CHAPTER III.

Friendship for Life.

Tom was very sorry that he could not continue in school the next year, but went back to the plough with the same good will and merry whistle with which he had followed it in the past. He labored to make the best furrow in the field, and always put in an honest day's work. Believing that his life was under the control of his heavenly Father, he was sure that He had sent him back to the farm from his loved employ in school. It was right because He did it, and he would leave all things in the Lord's hands, and willingly follow where He leads. He also resolved to continue his studies at home, and get all the knowledge he could. His Bible said: "The eyes of the wise are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness." Many things were dark to him now, because he was not wise enough to understand them. They were all plain to the Lord's eyes and he would trust Him to hold him by the hand and to guide him by His own all-seeing eyes.

At this time his step-father tried harder than ever to convert him over to his infidel notions by seeking to cause him to distrust the providences of God. Asking why God had taken away his own parents, and left him to be raised by an infidel, and why all the prayers which had been offered for his conversion had not been answered.

Tom told him it was not too late yet for their answer, and the Lord says, He will bring

us by ways we know not, and clouds and darkness are round about Him, and His ways are past finding out. His brother had prayed much for him, and died expecting to meet him in heaven.

He said: "I do not know what he wanted to see me in heaven for. I should think you all would want to see me in torment, if there is such a place."

Tom said earnestly: "Father, we could not be Christians and wish that. The Lord Jesus loves you and died for your sins. He has given us new hearts like His, that we may love you and want you saved. You ought to be able to see that Christianity is true by the difference it makes in Christians' lives from others."

Tom had not seen the dark cloud of anger cover his stepfather's face till he rose to his feet uttering the bitterest of cursing. Then he said: "I beg your pardon. I had no intention to offend you. Brother made me promise before he died that I would tell you of Jesus and His dying love." He stood irresolute, looking Tom in the face, and he looking him in the eyes until they lost their hate, and he murmured as to himself: "Tom is right, and it makes me mad because he forces me to see it in spite of myself." Then he turned and left him alone. From this time he had little to say to Tom except about the work of the farm.

It soon became evident that his stepfather was drinking more than usual, and Tom had to take the entire management of the farm, and his long experience as a laborer prepared him

to have the work done well. This debauch broke up in a long spell of sickness, and added another burden to Tom's load. During the long night watches in which he tended his stepfather, and rested the wornout waitman, he was startled by his unconscious talk, saying: "Tom is a Christian; he will not deceive me, I can trust him." At other times he would seem to be troubled about his money safe.

When Tom opened the closet door he found the combination unlocked, and the drawer keys hanging in the lock. In front of him in plain large letters was his father's name on the inside of the safe, and just above it the name of his grandfather. It seemed to him like something sacred, and he longed to explore all its hidden depths, and see if there were not other sacred momentos of loved ones. But he shut the door, and turned the combination, and it was secure.

As he lingered near he seemed to hear sweet voices of the past years in loving tones coming to him from the old iron safe. The precious words of prayer uttered by his father for him when he lay an infant in his dying arms, as he prayed that he might early be brought to Christ, and grow up a true useful Christian man. Then he seemed to hear from his own lips his father's message through Jim, with the gift of his Bible, and with deep emotion he softly returned the answer: "Yes, dear father, the Lord has graciously answered your prayer, and I have been brought early to know and love the Lord Jesus, and am reading your precious Bible and making it the rule of my life,

and by the Lord's help I will be a true and useful Christian man."

Then out of the dimly lighted closet as from the depths of the old safe came whispers of love and prayers from himself and brother, and long forgotten words of loving endearment, memories of his precious mother and brother came up and he was living over the past. Then groans from the sick had brought his thoughts back to the present; and he remembered that it was in that very room his father had prayed for him before he went home, and from there his precious mother had gone to rest after suffering untold sorrow from the terrible blight of infidelity, drunkenness, and cruelty by the man who had sacredly vowed to love, cherish, protect and comfort her. Oh, the terrible contrast between the lives of the two men who had been her companions in that home! One so loving, true, pure and unselfish, ready to do all he could for her happiness! The other so untrue and selfish, caring only to please himself! The one blessing her life with gladness, and making her home a paradise; the other making her home a torment, and taking away every joy and delight, and gradually killing her with disappointment and sorrow. So Tom saw the difference between Christianity and the Bible in our lives, and infidelity and sin. The one brings love, joy, peace and blessings, while the other spreads sorrow, misery and blighting upon every life it touches.

After many days the scales turned and the sick man had another chance for life. As he

grew stronger he began to take interest in the farm, and when able he rode over it with Tom and was pleased with his good work and the large results. He tried to persuade him to give up his college course and give himself to his real talent, and make one of the best farmers in the land; but Tom had no real love for the farm, while his entire heart was in his love for study.

Tom had overtaxed his strength and had to suffer the penalty in a heavy sickness. For a time the chances were all against him, and he thought with great joy of the privileges of meeting his Savior and loved ones so soon. He felt that he was a poor lost sinner trusting simply in Christ and His atoning blood for life and salvation, and was not afraid to go with Him when He should come for him. Only one thing, his unfinished work, held him back to earth, and how could he die while that work had not been done?

Mae and her father came to see him while he was so sick, and the good man, who was a minister, talked kindly with him of his hope of salvation, and Tom told him that the Lord knew that he would be glad to go home any time He called, and that he was willing to stay and do all He wanted him to do. He had given himself wholly to the Lord for time and for eternity, and was willing to leave it all with Him.

He seemed to grow worse, and lay for some time unconscious of all about him, then he opened his eyes and called for Mae. As she

gave him her hand he noticed that though her eyes were red from weeping, her face was lighted by a sweet peaceful smile. As though his mind was still wandering he spake with rapturous delight: "Mae, I thought the gates of the heavenly city were open before me, and I could hear the sweet songs of the saved giving glory to the Lord, and the glorious light of the Lord filled the place. Then it seemed that the Lord Jesus came to me outside the gate, and I was so happy and glad to go with Him. Then in tenderness and love He seemed to say: 'I want you yet on earth to labor for Me. Your willing mind is acceptable, but there is work for you to do. Remember that I am with you all the time, and will guide you by My Spirit in all things. My strength shall be perfect in your weakness and My grace sufficient for you. I will help you in all things.' In reply, I said, 'Lord, I am willing and ready to do Thy will,' and as the gates were closing, and the music dying away He said, 'Tell Mae.' "

She was weeping from joy, and said, "I was praying that you might not die, but live to glorify God, and the impression came over me fully, that you would not die, but live, and that I should be helped by you. I am so happy to know that you will live, and will be my friend and helper in life. It is so sweet to know that the Lord is with us and hears and answers our prayers, and makes our joys full. Let us always be faithful to Him."

In reply Tom said: "Mae, you are so kind, and have been so true a friend, that while I

live it shall be my happiness next to the Lord's service to befriend and help you. I shall strive to make my life worthy of your friendship, and will never lose sight of you, nor let any opportunity fail in which I can possibly be of help to you. The Lord is so good! I shall not die, but live!' In a short time he grew quiet and was soon in a deep sweet sleep, and Mae went and told her father that she had been praying for Tom, and felt sure he would get well. They left while he slept, promising to come again soon.

Tom's stepfather was glad because of his recovery, but was far from being happy. He had been brought to the very brink of the grave, and had looked into its dark depths without any hope, and it had filled him with trembling and horror. His infidelity had brought him no support in that fearful hour, nor light to relieve its fearful darkness. Then he had seen Tom nearing the same grave with a calm, sweet trust in the Lord, a solid hope in Christ of eternal life, full of light, peace and joy; while his own soul had been full of darkness, fear and trembling. His judgment told him there is a reality in Christianity, and he wondered if there could be mercy in Christ and His atoning death for him.

Tom was improving rapidly when Mae and her father came again. He told the minister how he had first sought and found the Savior, and then of His presence and help through all his days of darkness. Then of his father's Bible, how it made dark places light, and had

guided him uneeringly through life, and of his present purpose to spend his life in the Lord's service. After their talk, Mae came and placed some bright, beautiful flowers on the table near his bed. She told him that she had been praying that his stepfather might be saved, and be willing to give him a good education, and she felt confident that it would be done, because she believed she should have the things she asked.

Tom said he knew all things are possible with God, and was so glad to know that she had been helping him with her prayers for this thing. Then Mae held up the medal and said: "Tom, I have not forgotten our promise to be friends, and intend faithfully to keep it while I live." She then handed him a smaller medal exactly like hers, and asked that he would wear it in place of his watch charm as a reminder and pledge of their friendship. She was soon to leave for college, and somehow felt that she would need his friendship and sympathy more than he would need hers.

He accepted the gift and said: "I shall always be happy to remember you as my best earthly friend, and it will be my greatest earthly pleasure to do anything I can to secure your happiness. I shall strive in every way I can to make myself worthy to be your friend, and shall ever hold myself ready to meet your every wish and need; and this shall ever be a sweet reminder."

When they parted Mae said: "Pray for me every day you live, that I may be kept by the

power of God, and be faithful in all things." To which Tom answered: "I will pray for you every day as I pray for myself." The minister had him promise to spend some time with them as soon as he was strong enough to make the trip.

During the days of recovery Tom was exceedingly happy to feel that he might be of any help to Mae, who had done so much for him. The life she had prayed so earnestly for, now it had been spared, should be made as worthy as possible, and should be subject to any demand from her. On account of his deep poverty he never thought of being anything more to her than an humble friend; and his very friendship would prevent him from wishing her to leave her lovely home with its life of elegant ease and share his life of toil and hardships. But he would develop himself and live so close to the Lord that he might prove himself through life worthy of her friendship and be as helpful to her as possible.

A few days after this visit Tom learned that his stepfather had spent the whole night in the very depths of spiritual darkness. His sins came up before him and he felt his guilt and condemnation before God. He spent the night in deep distress, fearing to sleep lest he should wake up in torment. When the morning came he went to the grove where Tom had spent so many hours with his Bible, and kneeling at his rustic seat, confessed and gave up his sins, and sought pardon through Christ and His atoning death. He could never tell how long he was

there; but after awhile the Lord appeared to him and took all his load of sin away, and filled him with joy and peace with God. When he rose to his feet it seemed that he was in a new world. The leaves of the trees and the grass seemed greener, the birds' song sweeter, and flowers were more beautiful, and he was filled with love and gratitude to God. He was filled with deepest astonishment at himself, because he was constantly saying: "Our Father in heaven," and "My Lord and my God, I love thee!"

When he entered Tom's room he put his arms around the boy, as he sat propped up in bed, and said: "Yes, it is all true! Jesus did die for sinners, and has saved me. The many prayers for me are all answered. I do hope your mother and brother know of it in their happy home. I know what Christian love is now." Tom's eyes were running over with tears of joy as he said: "I am so happy! Thanks be unto the Lord for His great mercy!"

He told Tom of the terrible night of darkness and agony. That evening he had heard him telling Jim about Jesus dying on the cross for our sins. In human flesh, as our substitute, He had all our sins laid upon Him, and offered His pure blood and holy soul and body as an offering for our sins, and by the value of the infinite holiness of the Son of God joined with His human nature, made complete and full satisfaction for our sins. By his atoning death he put our sins entirely away; so

that all who believe on and trust Him, depending on His righteousness and atoning death, are saved to all eternity. Then as they had talked of the great love of God in giving Christ to die and of Christ Who loved us and died for us, he seemed to see Christ lifted upon the rough, rugged cross suffering for his sins. In his mind he could see the great love of Jesus beaming in His eyes, as he saw His loving face paling in death. His deadened conscience seemed to leap into life, accusing him of the deepest guilt and ingratitude because he hated such a loving friend. He felt his guilt and owned that he ought to be lost; and it seemed that such guilt as his was too great for even the infinite merit of the blood of Jesus to wash away. So he spent the night in remorse and despair; but finally cast himself with all his sins upon the mercy of God in Christ, and found pardon, peace, life and salvation. He was complete in Christ. He gave himself wholly to the Lord, and felt that the love of Christ made him willing to live for him, more faithfully than he had lived for Satan in the years past. Tom should enter school as soon as able, and continue till he was fully prepared for his life work of preaching the gospel of Christ.

Tom was so happy that it hastened his recovery, and they had many sweet talks of Jesus and His love and grace, and of the teachings of the Bible during these happy days. Tom told him of the sufficient grace of Christ, and of his strength that is made perfect in our

weakness. We are not able to live alone, and we can not overcome the temptations of Satan, nor put off the old habits of the past; but Christ is able to give us power to overcome and put them off. When we are accepted of God in Christ we have life and salvation through faith in Him; and through faith we may receive strength to overcome and put off all the old habits of sin, and live true and useful lives. As the branch lives by the life of the vine, so we live by the life, and grace, and strength of Christ. We are to live by looking to and depending upon Him.

He immediately began to study the Bible to know the doctrines of grace, and to know and do the commands of Christ. It was a wonder to many when he went to the church near his home and told his experience of the grace of God in Christ, and was baptized into its fellowship. His experience and life brought new life into the church, and gave a new impetus to the cause.



CHAPTER IV.

His Mother's Letter.

Tom was able to enter school after the close of the summer vacation. Few of the old class were there, but Ben gave him a warm welcome. He had spent rather a sorry time after Tom left school, and was now glad of his return that he might help him to a better life. The others had influenced him for bad, and had led him into disobedience to Christ.

Tom told him it was because he had neglected to read and obey his Bible, and had neglected by faith and prayer to draw grace and strength from Christ to enable him to overcome the evils within and around him.

Tom also told him that the new birth put a new nature in us, it did not take the old fleshy nature out. You may bud the Elberta peach into an old seedling, and all the fruit that grows above the bud will be Elberta peaches, while all below will be seedlings. So the Christian has two natures, the Spirit and the flesh; and he may live after one as well as the other. If he yields himself up to the flesh, and lives after his old appetites and pleasures, he will reap corruption; but if he lives after the Spirit he shall reap life. Many who are saved fail to mortify the body with its deeds, and lose the joys of salvation. Others are led by the Spirit and find in the Bible the will of Christ, and loving obey it, and live pure, happy, useful lives.

They had many sweet seasons of Bible study

and prayer together; and Ben soon found himself yielding to the leading of the Holy Spirit, realizing a deeper experience of grace, and by a clearer knowledge of the Bible, and obedience to its teachings, living a purer and happier Christian life.

The older girls seemed more bitter than ever against Tom, and it was hard for him to tell which they hated worse, his piety or his poverty. They also mocked Ben's attempt to live a Christian life, and called him a summer Christian. He acknowledged that he had not lived as a Christian ought, but he did love and trust Christ as his Savior, and was ashamed of his unfaithful life, and had changed it. Which manner of living did they like best? He thought it strange that young women could approve of a drinking, rowdy life more than of a pure Christian life. Why should they seek to turn him back to sin and ruin instead of helping him to soberness and purity? He begged them to turn and seek Christ and be saved. He and Tom from that time began to pray for them and seek their salvation.

After his stepfather's conversion Tom's life at home was much changed. Here he found love and sympathy and help in all his efforts to serve God. Jim was much rejoiced over the change in the old master, but his wife, Catherine, did not believe the change was real, and expected him to go back deeper into sin than ever. She did not think it possible for him to be saved after he had led her boy, who had waited on him, into the hopeless ruin of infidelity and drunkenness.

Tom told her that Christ died for sinners, and came to seek and save the lost, and they all ought to pray that the old master should hold out and be able to lead all to Christ whom he had led into sin. Some days later the old woman told Tom that her son Natt said that the old master swore at his horse, and it was just as she expected.

That night his stepfather told him he had sworn at his horse before he knew what he said, and was filled with sorrow, and prayed the Lord to forgive him, and he also prayed for Natt, that he might be led to Christ. Then he told Natt; that he was ashamed to talk that way after the Lord had been so good to him, and that he wanted him to be a Christian too. Natt was much moved, and said: "Master, I have gone with you into sin, and now I will go with you in the Lord's service. I gave up drink when you did, and I want to give up all sin. Pray for me that I may be saved." He told him of Jesus and His dying love and the way to be saved, and Natt said he could not help loving such a Savior as Christ; and he gave himself wholly to Him to do His will.

It was a great sorrow to his stepfather that he had been overcome by his old habit, and he told Tom that he had tasted the bitterness of his sin, and was sorely tired of all the wickedness of his life, and this hatred of sin made him want to be entirely free from it. He loved God and righteousness, and wanted to put off all sin and live wholly for Christ. Tom told

him again of Jesus' power to save, and of His sufficient grace and strength which is made perfect in our weakness, and urged that by faith and prayer he obtain divine help to overcome.

It was a great joy to Tom that his stepfather fully knowing his own weakness, was learning so readily to depend upon the strength of Christ, and by that strength doing all things through Christ Who strengthened him. He had earnestly prayed that the Lord would take away the thirst for drink, or if that was not His will, then give him power to overcome it. In answer to this earnest prayer, he was relieved from the power of his appetite, and made to rejoice in the consciousness of the keeping power of God, and from that hour he never felt their power any more.

Tom began to realize more fully the meaning of Christ when He said: "Have faith in God," and "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them." For, "All things are possible to him that believeth." At school he led Ben to understand the power of faith in God, and to experience divine help from earnest prayer through faith in Christ. He learned to rest upon the promises of God in Christ, and put the Bible to actual glad test by deeper experiences of the grace of God in Christ. They both began to pray and work for the salvation of the pupils in school; and especially for Ben's brother and sister, and some of his friends. They were exceedingly happy when

their prayers were answered and a revival of religion began in the school and spread over much of the community. Tom spent much of the noon hour teaching the young converts from the Bible to do all things the Lord has commanded.

Mae's parents wrote to her of the great change which had come over the school and community, and of the large number added to the church near the school; and of Tom's work among the pupils. Also of the narrow escape and conversion of one of her close friends.

She had gone to a dance with a young man, who was too drunk on his return to control his horse. A violent storm broke upon them as they were approaching Tom's home, and the horse, being badly frightened, threw her out of the buggy, but carried her drunken escort, in a helpless condition, in the foot of the buggy, away with him in his mad flight.

She found herself unhurt and alone in the darkness, lighted only by the blinding flashes of lightning, while the earth trembled under the terrible roar of the wind, falling pines, and deafening thunder. It seemed fearful indeed to have to die alone in such darkness, and she not at all prepared to meet God in the judgment. In the fury of the storm she fell upon her face and begged God to have mercy upon her; and, in almost mortal terror, promised to give up all sin and give herself to the Lord forever.

By the glare of the lightning Tom had seen the wild dash of the horse and her fall from

the buggy, and had run out in the storm to bear her aid. Amid the terrible confusion of the storm he reached her and carried her into the house, just in time to escape the worst danger. She told him of her promise to give up all for Christ and give herself to him. They bowed together in prayer and Tom asked God to accept her in Christ and forgive all her sins for His sake. While they prayed she was enabled to give up all sin, and fully surrender herself to God, and accept Christ as her Savior. She was not the only young woman who realized that stormy night the folly of trusting themselves to the protection of drinking young men, and there were others who learned in the fury of that storm that they were not prepared to die, and the revival influence grew deeper and wider after this.

Mae wrote expressing her great surprise and joy over the spiritual change among her old friends, and her wonder at the way the Lord had led Tom to prepare him for usefulness. Left alone in the world, his father's Bible had been a rich inheritance. It had led him to a clearer knowledge of God and His will, and to form a true Christian life, and enabled him to lead many to Christ. Who can tell the results of that Bible upon the world, in the life and work of Tom in all the years to come? When she compared his Bible with hers, she was astonished at the difference in their results. To Tom his Bible was the true Word of God, given to be known, believed, loved and obeyed. In it he heard God speaking, and

learned His will, and was happy to do it. This Bible had truly been a rich inheritance to Tom, and had led him to eternal and heavenly riches. When she thought of the little her own Bible, and those of thousands of other Christians, had accomplished, she was reminded that not the hearers, but the doers, of the Word are blessed. Tom had studied his Bible that he might know and do what the Lord says. It was of his life the whole, and not a part; and by its leading him to know, and love, and live the will of God, he could not help making life a success.

The winter vacation came and Tom was enjoying his rest at home before going to the city high school to prepare for college. Little did he realize what harvests had been planted by him to be gathered in coming life. Jim had been true to him through all those years of darkness and toil, and was pleased beyond measure at his progress and prospects, and felt sure that the Word of God, which he had planted in his heart and life, would grow up into the harvest of a good and useful life.

Tom told him of Mae's letter concerning his father's Bible, as such a great inheritance, and of the great results it had accomplished and would probably accomplish in the world. Jim was pleased, and told him that his father had left him a great deal more besides his Bible and his prayers, but they were worth far more to him than all his earthly inheritance. It was late at night, the fire was burning low, when Jim told him he had a letter for him from his

mother, written by her just before she died. It was in two envelopes, the first to to be opened when he was eighteen years old, and the other when twenty-one.

Tom took the letter and handled it as if it were something sacred, and his eyes filled with tears as he looked upon his name written by his mother's own fair hand. Then out of a full heart he said: "Precious mother, the world has been dark since you and brother went home! But the Lord has been good to me, and helped me. He gave me good Jim to help me, and Mae to sympathize with me, pray for and help me; and He converted my stepfather, and has made me a blessing to many! Truly the Lord has been good to me."

Jim told him that the letter contained some valuable papers, which tells of a large property so invested as to become due when he was twenty-one years old; while the first envelope contained means to enable him to obtain a real good education. His stepfather knew nothing about this property, and Tom was not to tell anybody anything about it till he was of age. Jim also told him that all the property controlled by his stepfather had belonged to Tom's father, and half of it was to come to him when of age, and all of it at his stepfather's death. But his mother had said, the letter was worth a great many times more than all the farms, bank accounts and other property in the hands of his stepfather. Jim chuckled as he told these things to Tom and saw his eyes open wide in wonder, and he asked him what

would those school girls think, if they only knew that the ploughboy whom they despised for his poverty, would be worth more than any man in that part of the land. He then told him that he must never forget the preacher's daughter, who had sense and goodness of heart enough to appreciate and help him in his poverty and deepest need.

Tom's eyes brightened as he said: "I will be a true friend to her as long as we both live! But why did they keep me so poor, and put me down so low in the eyes of all the young people? I know that mother had a good reason for what she did, but it has caused me no end of suffering."

Jim said that his mother kept it from his knowledge so that he would not be ruined by it. The young men in school had all been ruined by the fact that they were kept from work, and were not fit for business, and had nothing to stimulate them to future effort, as they expected property enough to keep them from work. They did not know the value of wealth, and most of them would soon spend it and become the poorest of the poor. But she believed that poverty, labor and hardships would develop true manhood, self-reliance, and a proper knowledge of the value of property; and he would not throw it away on worldly pride and foolish vanity.

Tom was filled with gratitude because they had acted so wisely with him. He had seen the folly of the pride of wealth without moral character and even mental worth, and had

learned that true life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses. His lonely, helpless need had led him to look to God in Christ for help, and his hard work had developed him, and had given him such knowledge of life as nothing else could give.

He told Jim that as long as he lived, neither he nor his family should ever lack a friend. As he had been a friend to his parents, and had been equally true to him, he would be true to him and his. When he came back from college and was settled, Jim should spend his life close to him, and be his friend and helper till they parted to meet in their Father's house. Jim said he wanted to be near him, for he had promised his father and mother that he would take care of him as long as he lived, and he wanted to keep his promise faithfully to the end.

When they separated that night a heavy burden of responsibility had been lifted from Jim's mind, and Tom had but one special thought, and that made him too happy to sleep. Now if he could ever make himself worthy he need not hesitate to ask Mae to be not only his friend, but his companion, and she would not need to look forward to a life of toil, hardships and poverty. But he was not at liberty to tell even her of his good fortune, as his mother had requested that he would tell no one. As he lay awake thinking over the matter, there seemed but one thing possible. He would pursue his studies, and develop himself so fully that he would be worthy of her, and

he would be so true to her that in time to come he would win her love and her hand.

He was almost crazed with joy as he thought such a thing possible. He had felt that he had no right to ask her to leave her beautiful home and good support, and share his life of toil and privations, but now he wanted her to have the benefit of all he would possess. If she could not enjoy it with him as his companion, he thought that he would rather go through life in poverty and toil, with her sympathy and help as a friend. But he carried it all to the Lord in prayer, and earnestly asked, if it would be best for them both, and in keeping with the will of God, that he would give her to him as a companion in the time to come. After some time spent in earnest prayer he was made to feel fully assured that the Lord had given her to him. While in prayer he remembered that "All things are possible to them that believe," and he was enabled to believe that he received the thing he prayed for, and that he should have it. A sweet, inexpressible peace filled his heart, and with deep joy he praised the Lord.

This assurance was so full that it gave him perfect peace of mind during all the dark years of waiting which were to come, and kept him from all fear as to the final result. He was sure that the Lord had answered, "Yes," and he believed that it would surely be as he had said. His one concern was to make himself worthy of her, that he might win her love.

With mingled feelings of sorrow and joy

Tom turned away from his old home, as he went to the city to prepare for college. He had wished to get away from the monotony and loneliness of his farm life; besides the friendship of Jim and his stepfather's new life, he had nothing to bind him to the old home, except the graves of his loved ones under the evergreen oaks. Near these graves under the shade of the liveoaks, he had built his rustic seat for study, and had twined the wild vines near by into a sheltered retreat for prayer. He felt that he would sadly miss these quiet, sacred places for solitary study and communion with God.

In the new school with Tom there were many boys as poor as he was supposed to be; but he was from the farm, and in the eyes of many, was the plough-boy still. But he was too busy with his work to care for anything they did or said. He was more than paid for his trouble by the rapid progress he made. Here also he could attend church and hear his old friend preach every Sunday, and spend many a happy hour in his home. He was exceedingly happy over Mae's return home, although he was sorry that she had to suspend her studies for the time. Her friendship stimulated him no little in his hard work; and more than once he found himself almost ready to confide to her his good fortune; but he felt that he must respect his mother's request; and he would wait the developments of the future, and trust the Lord to bring the whole matter to a full consummation.

CHAPTER V.

A May Morning.

Mae came home in the early spring time, when the flowers were waking into life from their long winter sleep. Tom was now free from every care, and was fully determined to make all he could of the large possibilities the Lord had opened to him in life. His heart was full of gratitude to God, and his life was full of joy in the Lord. His present life seemed to him the sweet, beautiful, opening flower, full of promise of the ripe, luscious fruit of the coming harvest.

Mae was pleased with his progress and general development. His shrinking timidity had given place to an open, kind, manliness that pleased her more than she realized. They met frequently as the days went by, but only for short talks over their past experiences. Tom told her that he had prayed for her every day since they separated in that sick room, and in these seasons of prayer he had been led to believe that the Lord would supply all of her needs, give her a good education and make her life bright and happy. He also told her of his stepfather's conversion, and new happy Christian life; and of the gracious revival and conversion of so many of the pupils in their old school. Indeed, there was much to tell on both sides whenever they met.

The first of May dawned upon the earth in a bright, glad Sabbath morning. The earth was adorned in her loveliest robe of green, orna-

mented with an unlimited wealth of beautiful spring flowers. All Nature seemed running over with joy and gladness, and the old world seemed as young and beautiful as she might have been in her youthful prime. The balmy air was full of sweet perfume of lovely flowers that glorified the orchard and the yard, and the glorious sunshine warmed the earth into happy life. The birds were singing their sweetest notes, while the distant church bells called the worshipers to come and meet their Lord.

The pastor of the Allendale Baptist church had read in his home that sweet Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," and had lifted up his voice in humble, grateful prayer and thanksgiving to the Father of mercies, and Giver of all good. Then his daughter, Mae, touched the keys of the piano, and the family joined in singing that sweet Sabbath song:

"Welcome, sweet day of rest,
That saw the Lord arise;
Welcome to this reviving breast,
And to these rejoicing eyes."

The morning worship over, Mae and Tom were seated on the porch feasting their eyes upon the scenes of beauty around them, and breathing the soft, sweet perfume that filled the air. Mae softly sang:

"The King himself comes near,
And feasts his saints today;
Here we may sit and see him here,
And love and praise and pray."

When the song was finished Tom said: "In these glad spring days I feel that the King does indeed come near, and fills our hearts with gladness, and makes us rejoice in him with fullness of joy. If this world with all of its sin and sorrow has been made so beautiful and lovely by our heavenly Father, what will it be in our Father's house where the Lord God giveth them light, in whose presence is fullness of joy; and at whose right hand there are pleasures forevermore. I have often felt that I shall be glad when the time comes that I may enter upon that fullness of joy, and see the King in his beauty."

Mae sang again:

"Thine earthly Sabbath, Lord, we love;
But there's a nobler rest above;
To that our longing souls aspire,
With cheerful hope and strong desire."

"Yet there is so much to do for our Lord," she said, "that we ought gladly to give ourselves to the work here on earth. I feel that we ought not to spend our lives, like the disciples of Christ, after his ascension, standing looking up into heaven, but we should each go to his appointed task, to wait for the promised power, to preach the gospel to every creature, and to occupy till he comes. Then when our days of toil have ended, and grace has well refined our lives, we shall see and know and enjoy all we have desired and looked forward to according to the promise of our dear Lord."

Tom's face was thoughtful and his eyes were

fixed on space, as though looking into the distant future, as he said: "I have expected a busy life, full of toil, trials and hardships for the Master. His ministers are to bear hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and like Paul, I may learn how to glory in infirmities for Christ; yet in it all I expect to be happy in Christ by realizing his promised presence."

Mae sang, in a low, sweet voice:

"When I am happy in him,
December's as pleasant as May."

After the song was ended, she said: "The soul that enjoys His presence is not dependent upon the outward things of earth for its highest joy; but has within its own heart a living fountain of ever flowing happiness. Yet we are on the earth, and our Lord has made all things for us richly to enjoy. This lovely Sabbath day, with its hallowed and gracious privileges, the beauties of nature, the happiness of youth with its spring time of hope and pleasure, and the whole world is full and running over with the blessings of a gracious and loving Father. I feel that it is a blessed privilege to live in God's world, do His will, and enjoy His peace and blessings, and it will be joy inexpressible to enjoy Him in heaven."

Tom's face brightened and the far-off look gave way, as he turned his eyes upon the fair speaker before him, and replied: "It is indeed a happy privilege to live for Christ and with Christ, and to enjoy a Father's love and blessings. I am too much inclined to expect the

trials of life, and to look for the hardships. I never knew an earthly father's loving care, and having been accustomed from childhood to bear trials and privations, I am not naturally inclined to expect good things from my heavenly Father. Life has been terribly earnest in my experiences of the past, and I have been accustomed to look forward to preaching as a heavy responsibility. It is to watch for souls as one who must give an account to God, to bear the infirmities and burdens of others, making many rich by bringing them to Christ; and like Paul, I cry out, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' "

Mae replied: "'My grace is sufficient for thee,' and 'My strength is made perfect in weakness.' 'Our sufficiency is of Him.' We are not to think of going alone, but go forth in the name and strength and Spirit of our Lord. Then we have human sympathy and love to encourage us in laboring for Christ.

" 'There's many a rest along the pathway of life,

If we would only stop and take it.'

"I believe that we may so live in the love of God that we may be happy wherever his providence puts us. In each event of life we ought clearly to see His ruling hand, and realize His love whether we labor, endure, or enjoy His blessings, and feel sure that He will fill our lives as full of good things as will work our good and His glory. I like to live in the higher atmosphere of trust and love."

Tom answered: "Mae, much of my time I am vibrating between my ideal and real life. My ideal of Christian character, and the possibilities of what we are and can be in Christ, I sometimes fear can be fully realized only in heaven. But I have never fully included in it the element of constant, full and perfect enjoyment of God, and the 'all things' He has given us richly to enjoy. I shall strive after these also that my thanksgiving may the more abound. I know he is able to make all grace abound unto us, in so much that having all sufficiency in all things, and being enriched to all bountifulness, we may be able to abound unto every good work. But I feel so weak at times, and when I seem to stand alone in this large and wicked world, my faith almost fails and I see nothing but failure."

"Remember," said Mae, "at such times that your friends and brethren are praying for you. My father prays for you often, and mother and myself join most heartily with him in his daily prayer for you, and your success as a minister."

Tom replied: "It gives me great pleasure to know that I am remembered in your daily home prayers. The Lord is worthy of our best, and his service demands the fullest use of all our possibilities in life. I have gained much from the pure Christian atmosphere of your home. I grew up in an infidel home, and I am truly glad to have known one of the purest and best homes as well as one of the worst."

Mae replied with a shade of sadness on her face: "My father is a ripe Christian, and I know that I receive from his life and influence far more than I realize. He has broken much of late, and often speaks of going home. I fear that his burdens are too heavy for his strength; we need him with us for many years yet to come. It seems a pity that one so useful could not live more lives than one."

"Or be reproduced in many other lives when he has gone to his heavenly rest," said Tom.

The two sat and talked as they had often talked before, till the time for worship called them to the house of God. That lovely morning as Tom looked into Mae's sweet face and told of his purpose in life, and she listened with sweet sympathy and encouragement, he thought that she was herself the crowning part of that lovely morning. She was the most perfect and beautiful work of the same great Artist who had painted the earth with such an endless variety of beauty and glorified it with his matchless sunshine. She seemed to him the crown of all loveliness and beauty; and before he was aware of it, Tom was completely under the charm of her loveliness. It stole over him like the sweet aroma of the flowers, and filled him with unspeakable delight. He did not realize its source nor its power at the time, but only knew that he was exceedingly happy in her presence.

Together they attended the house of God, and bowed together in worship to their common Lord. They were in perfect sympathy in

their love for Christ, and purpose to serve Him through life. They were conscious of their kindred natures in the Lord, and there was a unity of tastes, purposes, thoughts and feelings which gave them unspeakable pleasure. Without knowing it Tom had fully and unconditionally fallen in love with his beautiful companion. The sweet witchery of that perfect May morning had waked love's young dream sweeter than the distilled fragrance of all the flowers of earth. This, the loveliest and prettiest of women, had entered into his inmost heart, and he was happy beyond all he had ever dreamed possible. He was also happy because Mae had said it had been the happiest day of all her life.

When Tom entered again upon his labor in school he felt that there was something more to live for in the world, and there were additional reasons for him to study and improve himself, that in every possible way he might make himself a fit companion for this grandest and best of women. He would cultivate his powers both of mind and heart to their fullest extent, and make himself in every respect worthy of Mae. He also looked forward to the day when he would have a home as pure, good and happy, as hers had ever been. He would inherit money enough to supply all that would be needful for comfort and happiness, while he devoted himself to the work to which the Lord had called him. There was not a shadow of doubt upon his mind that he was as well beloved as he loved, and it transformed his en-

tire life. He had more respect for himself as he was, and a deeper assurance of what he expected to become in time.

He gave himself to his work with a new vigor and a stronger purpose. He looked upon life in the light of that glad day, and believed it worth living. He was constantly thanking the Lord for the happiness he felt, and the hopes he entertained; and his daily prayer was that the Lord would so lead him that he might glorify him in all that he did.

The next day Mae returned to school and they met no more till the end of the term; but Tom was too busy and far too happy to find the time long or to have it drag. He lived by faith in Christ, abiding in him as the branch in the vine, and realized that his fullness of life, righteousness and strength were sufficient for him. He had learned that he was complete in Christ by receiving all the while of His infinite fullness. It was the joy of his life to realize that he had such a complete Savior, and by faith to abide in Him, and by loving obedience to His words realize his Lord's abiding presence within him. His highest aim was to abide in Christ, and to realize that Christ dwelt in him and lived in his life. "For me to live is Christ," was a much-loved text; and "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

CHAPTER VI.

An Ideal.

The days passed rapidly, and Tom's work at the Academy drew to a close. He finished the course of study with credit, and received the highest praise from the most competent judges in elocution. In reply to words of encouragement from his friends and pastor, he said: "I wish to succeed in my studies in order that I may do the better work for my Lord and Master; and I would like to succeed so well that I may make myself more worthy of the love and kindness of my friends."

The pastor said: "Do your best my son, and your friends will be proud of you; and be faithful, and your Master will own and bless your labors. Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth."

The closing day of the Academy was counted an important time in the town, and a large crowd attended in order to see what progress had been made by the pupils. Mae had returned and came leaning on the arm of the Banker's Son. Tom was pleased to see the expression of appreciation on her face when he came out victorious over all his opponents, both in elocution and in scholarship. But her escort was not at all pleased, and there was a frown upon his face, which but for dissipation would have been handsome. Later in the evening when Tom called upon Mae to bid her goodbye, for he was to leave imme-

diately to take a summer school, her escort began to make sport of the young preacher's declamation. But Tom was superior to him in wit, and the surly fellow began to twit him with his poverty, and to boast of his father's wealth. When he referred to Tom's clothes in a ludicrous manner, and Mae joined in his hearty laugh, Tom yielded and said no more. He had cared little for dress; and had wondered that this young man and others of his class in town spent more on fine clothes, and other useless luxuries than he was spending on his education; and it occurred to him that, perhaps, Mae was ashamed of his poor clothes in the presence of these finely dressed young men. She knew them all as well as he did, and she knew that they were dissipated, wicked and worldly, and that none of them were his equals in minds, morals, nor educations.

He left for his summer school wondering why it was that one so pure, so good and sensible as Mae, should not see and respect the true man, even beneath a common coat, and the sot and churl, even wrapped in the finest cloth.

When Tom entered his school room to begin his summer work, the sun shone brightly and all nature was wreathed in glad smiles, but he knew it not. Some briny tears had washed the mists from his eyes, and he had waked up to see plainly how precious Mae had become to him. He was sure that she was the very loveliest being he had ever seen; and he explained to himself, that she had grown up

in a home of wealth, and had been accustomed to the very best of privileges. She could not be expected to see all the true manliness of character there might be hid away under the disguise of poverty, and he attached no blame to her at all. But he resolved by the Lord's help to remove from himself all that could be objectionable to her, and to make himself worthy of her love. It would have been so much easier for him to have gone on his way of trials, and hard work had he been as sure of her love as he had been a few weeks before. But no, he thought, we never willingly wound those we love; and had she loved him, she would never have added any more weight to the heavy burden she knew he carried.

Yet Tom had no blame at all for her, it was all his fault. How deeply he felt his seeming poverty that day! His lack of refinement and cultivation rose before him as mountains of difficulties. But his love for Mae continued to grow, and his conceptions of her excellences only increased as his appreciation of himself decreased. It became largely true of her, "What thou wast my imagination made thee." He thought of her not only as a beautiful, lovely, sensible Christian woman, with a kind, loving sympathetic heart; but he pictured her as a thoroughly cultivated, developed, talented woman. He gradually raised her in his imagination upon a high pedestal, so highly lifted up above all other women, that she became a perfect model of beauty, loveliness and perfection.

He went about his work with a towering determination to bend every thing to his purpose to cultivate himself, and to develop all his resources to such an extent that she could not be ashamed of him any more. His will power seemed to gain strength and his native timidity gave way, and he took hold upon the school with such determination that every pupil felt the force of his power and yielded at once.

He would, perhaps, have grown morose during these days of toil and darkness had it not been for the influence of the strong purpose to prepare himself for usefulness. He felt that the Lord had called him to preach the glorious gospel of Christ, to bring sinners to Him, and thereby lift them up from their fallen state to a pure and noble life. He must prepare to do this work, and by this preparation he would reach the point where this most lovely of women need not feel ashamed of him.

Tom visited the pastor's home that winter; but Mae was away. Had he been less influenced by his feeling of depression from doubt of Mae's love, he would have remained another week and met her on her return; but he thought it would be of no avail, as he could expect no true woman to care for him in his present crude condition. He had met many true and good women, but none he thought could compare with this one. It was impossible for any one to come up to the high ideal standard he believed belonged to Mae. He did not meet her for several years after this, and

so had no means by which he could modify his opinion of her. Through all these years which followed he thought of her only in the light of that glorious May morning when he first realized the exquisite pleasure of being in love. Some times when he remembered that cruel evening, he wondered if after all he was not in love with a shadow, the creation of his own fancy; but he decided if it were only a shadow he would love this ideal woman and seek for her in coming life. Somewhere surely there must live one who embodied these elements of beauty and perfection of character. He determined to develop them in his own life, and he was confident he would find the same perfection in Mae's; for she had taught him by her life to believe in its reality.

The following year Tom spent in a distant part of the State preparing to enter college. Here he came in contact with people quite different from those of his old home. The Lord gave him warm and able friends, who were greatly pleased with his preaching, and the church employed him as assistant to their pastor who was in feeble health. The salary was large enough to meet all his needs, and he was no longer cramped by reason of poverty. The pastor with whom he labored became to him a father, and gave him much aid. He was received into the best homes in the city, and thereby found much to improve and polish his life. He met many true earnest Christian women; but none of them approached that ideal woman he had left in his old pastor's home.

He sent many well written letters to this friend of his helpless boyhood, and in them he sent several messages to Mae, but he never received any in return. He would prize more highly the slight references to her even more than all the other information.

In the summer vacation Tom filled the pulpit while the pastor sought health among the mountains, and did most of the preaching the remainder of the year. During the winter he made a short visit to his old home, and found that his old pastor had moved from his beautiful and lovely home, and found him on a sick bed. Mae was in a distant State with some relatives, attending college, and was not expected home until spring.

He told Tom of the deep sorrow he felt in giving up his home, and of the unavailing prayers he offered during those days of darkness; and also how he wondered why the church, and even the Lord, seemed to have forsaken him. His prayers seemed hindered and he was in great darkness, and could not understand why his Lord seemed to cast him off in his old age. He knew the wrong was in him, and prayed the Lord to show it to him. He knew if he had done well he should be accepted; and if not sin lay at the door. He was led to see his mistake in not teaching his church to do all that Christ commands as to the support of the gospel and preaching it over all the world. He sought forgiveness through Christ; but it seemed impossible for him to ever be able to undo his mistake, and

he prayed that Tom might come back and do it for him.

It seemed that every enterprise failed, and nothing he undertook prospered, and all was dark, and actual starvation seemed but a little in the future. He fasted and prayed over his condition. He came to God, a poor, helpless sinner, pleading the merits of the atoning blood of Christ, who died as his substitute; and rose from the dead and ascended far above all principalities and powers at the right hand of the throne of God to intercede for him. He placed himself in Christ, upon His atoning merit before the Lord; and in His risen and ascended glorious worthiness he presented his earnest prayer for mercy and help. He hid himself in Christ, and in his glorious merit found access to God; and being accepted in Christ, he came with confidence to the rich throne of grace and found grace and help in his need. He not only experienced the blessedness of pardon, the glorious peace of justification and acceptance with God; but was also fully assured that the Lord would supply all his needs, and take care of his family and educate his children. He also felt that he should be permitted to bring other sinners to Christ by the gospel before he went home.

Tom told him to give up all anxiety as to the support of himself and family; for the Lord had given him abundant ability to supply all his needs, and to finish his education. It would be the greatest of pleasure to him as a son in the ministry to keep him and his loved ones free from all want.

It was a sore trial to Tom, both because of the change in the condition of his friend, and also his disappointment in not meeting Mae. But he found such a sweet spirit of trust and loving resignation to the will of God, that he was truly glad to have been with his friend and father in the ministry.

They communed much together, and the old man told him that his work was almost done and the crown was close at hand. He had made a great mistake in his pastoral work, by trying to bear all the burdens and make all the sacrifices himself, instead of teaching his people to bear their part. He had relieved them from bearing his support by laboring to make it himself while he gave them his services free. They were abundantly able to have paid him for his labor; but years ago he had been misled by a good man, who was able to preach without any support.

This accounted for his early decline in health, as well as the loss of his home. He was hopeful of regaining his strength to a small degree and being able to labor a while longer for others. It seemed evident to Tom that his old friend was rapidly losing his grasp on the things of this life, and that it could not be a great while till he should reach his reward. It was a great pleasure to him to divide his own support with his friend, and not only keep him from want, but supply the means for Mae to continue in school. This was done by putting regular amounts in the bank to his and his wife's credit as long as

the old man lived, and when he died it was increased. The deposit was made in the name of an "unknown friend." The knowledge of this fact, and the love of his son in the ministry brought back something like the glow of health to his face and strength to his limbs, and he began work again.

Tom was sorry to return without seeing Mae. In speaking of her the father would say: "She is no ordinary Christian woman, and will truly make any good man happy who wins her heart and hand. But she ought to be married to a preacher; as she is better fitted for that kind of life than any other." Tom fully agreed with him in this statement; and told him something of his ideal and purpose. His old friend warned him not to live too much of an ideal life; because life is terribly earnest and real. He advised him to take life as it really is.

Tom's vacation was ended and he was compelled to tear himself away and return to college. He gave himself almost wholly to study that he might develop all his possibilities of mind, heart and life.

Three more years of absence from home and hard work passed away, and the college course was finished, and Tom was in the Theological Seminary. These years of hard and faithful work had done much in developing the true manhood and scholarship to which he aspired. He had spent his vacations aiding the same city pastor with whom he had labored so much. Friends had feared for his health; but he had

attended as closely to the development of his body as of his mind. "A sound mind in a sound body," had been the object of his efforts in his personal development. He had sought by sensible use of study, exercise, diet, sleep and temperateness in all things to develop his body and mind to their fullest capacity. He had a healthy body and mind, and seemed to enjoy with thanksgiving all of life; and his work was a delight, and an unending pleasure. He put himself heartily and fully into whatever he did; and had enthusiasm enough in his nature to brighten the most common place work, and spread around it a halo of glory which lifted it entirely out of the commonplace.

His growth seemed marvelous to those who knew him well; and yet he retained the same humble, meek and teachable spirit he had manifested at the beginning. He felt that he was preparing himself to help lift the world up to God, to open the blinded spiritual eyes, to deliver the prisoners of death by preaching the gospel of Christ. The churches needed teachers and leaders, and he could not teach them till he had been taught.



CHAPTER VII.

A Model.

A short visit to the old home after three years of absence was a great privilege to Tom; but it made him sad to find his old friend and pastor in such feeble health. Those were precious days which he spent in the sick room of this dear aged saint; and they were ever bright in memory with the presence of Christ and the glory of God. He was even glad to remember that what money could do to make his condition bearable had been done; and a regular stated amount was in the bank for the necessities of his family; so that his mind might be relieved from anxiety about them. These amounts were to come to the family from an unknown friend; as Tom had good reason to believe that they might decline to use them if they knew their source; and his friend thought it advisable too, so that they should be relieved from too great a burden of dependence and a heavy tax of gratitude. Tom wanted to win Mae's love and not her gratitude, and the dear father commended him for his manliness and true sentiment. Tom told him plainly how dear Mae was to him, and of his purpose to make himself worthy of her, and then to seek her love and her hand. That he would never lose sight of her, and in in one way or another he would see that she was saved from every trial and burden possible. He had prayed over the matter very earnestly, and had been assured that the Lord

would give her to him as a companion in the time to come. He had determined that they would build their home after the model of her own childhood's bright and lovely home.

The father told Tom that he had prayed for this, and had been assured of the Lord that it would all be right. He was now not far from home, and it gave him great relief of mind to know Tom was not only willing but abundantly able to keep his dear wife and children from sore poverty and want. Tom had told him of his interest in his father's estate.

He was now relieved of his last heavy burden, and had nothing to do but wait the summons of his Lord to come home. He had longed for the coming of his son in the ministry, that he might impart to him his loving blessing in advice and prayers, and be refreshed by his love and sympathy.

Here in that sick room it seemed that heaven came down their souls to greet as they talked of the home-coming of all the redeemed of earth, the glorious rewards of the faithful, the crowns of life and the love and joys of heaven. The dear old man felt that one hour in heaven with his Lord would more than make up for all his labors and suffering on earth.

Then they talked of the unsaved millions of earth, the undeveloped resources of the churches, and the great demand for prepared and faithful workers for the Lord. The old pastor wanted to live that he might labor for his Lord; but he was assured that his work

was almost over. He had given himself, his property and home all into the Lord's work; and now he trusted his family in the Lord's hands, as to one who keepeth covenant and had never forsaken him in all the trials of the past. He also warned Tom against his own mistakes, and urged that he would come back and take up the work which he left, and teach and develop his people in the support of a pastor, and sending the gospel abroad. He wanted to lead Tom to avoid all disobedience to Christ, and thereby be relieved from failure in His work.

Here Tom spent the days of his vacation in this Beulahland so near the eternal city, and his Father's house, that he could feel the power of an endless life, and realize the glory of the life to come. He was filled by it with purer and nobler purposes, and was stimulated by the realizations of the recompense of the rewards that await all who live pure, faithful and obedient lives.

When at last he tore himself away from the bedside of his friend to return to his work, it seemed to Tom that he had left the brightest part of earth behind, and that his truest and best friend would soon be in glory, and he would be left an orphan again, alone in the world. In all the lonely years of the past he had been a true father, and Tom had never gone to him for aid without finding him more than ready to grant it. They had lived in perfect sympathy with each other, and he had learned of late to lean upon Tom, as he had once leaned upon him.

When they came to part the old man clinging to his hand and looking into his face, said: "I know that you will see my face no more in the flesh; but we will meet again in our Father's house. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Preach the word, and be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Take heed to thyself, and unto the doctrine, continue in them; for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." Then loosing his hand, but looking into his face, he said: "I have committed my family to God. When you come back from school see after their spiritual needs. Care for them as they may need and you are able. As you love me, love them and care for them for me." Then his eyes grew moist as he said: "Precious Mae! Write to her of Jesus and His love; and keep the fire of love to Christ burning brightly upon the altar of both your hearts. You may both have to suffer some; but after that you have suffered a while, the God of all grace, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you." To this Tom uttered a heartfelt "Amen." Then the

old man said, "God bless you my son," while the mother gave him a mother's kiss, and said: "Pray for us." Tom assured her that he would pray for them every day; and urged that she would call upon him at any and all times when he could be of any help to her; and that she should never suffer the need of anything, if he could only know it. He loved them all as the best and almost only friends of his childhood, and it would be his pleasure to keep them from every want. He would come to them as soon as his work of preparation was over, and would ever be a son and brother to them.

Tom would gladly have remained with them till the end came, but it was necessary for him to return to his study. Mae was away preparing herself for teaching during Tom's visit, and he was sad at not being able to meet her. When he went back to work he wrote to her of his visit to the old home, how sadly he missed her there. He referred tenderly to his visit and stay with her father, and told her how near the peace and blessedness of heaven it was in that chamber of sickness. He wrote as he would have spoken to her of the love of Christ, and the peace of God which passes all understanding; and how he wanted to live so near to Christ, and be filled with His presence, and the power of the Holy Spirit, that he might feel heaven always as near as he had in that home, and especially in that sickroom, with her dear father. It is a sad mistake for a Christian to live so far from Christ that he walks in darkness, and shivers

under the icy coldness of a backslidden state. To live in Christ and be fully conscious of union with Him would brighten the darkest hours of gloom, and fill the whole life with joy and gladness.

In reply to this letter Tom received a carefully worded note, thanking him for his visit to her father and his kind suggestions concerning a consecrated life; and then closed by asking him to please not continue the correspondence. He never wrote again to her during his years of study, except when her father died he sent her a letter of sympathy that she might know that he felt the deep grief of a second orphanage. To this letter he received no answer.

With all this, Tom never once doubted that Mae was the same true, sweet-spirited, sensible, lovely woman he had thought her to be, and that she was worth all the trouble it might cost to win her. He supposed that she regarded him yet as the poor, undeveloped youth, whose poverty of appearance had served as a cause for ridicule for the sots and swells of the town. He attributed no blame to her feeling of repulsion toward him; but wondered if she would ever be able to divest herself of those first impressions and receive him in his real character. Sometimes he wondered if he was not in love with an ideal; but he would end in the assurance that this ideal was embodied in a real living substance. That substance was the girl, the image of whose face he had carried indelibly printed on his memory through all these years of toil.

He had sketched the face from memory, and also studied the use of the brush that he might reproduce the face, and was so successful that he carried the study to a high degree of success. He not only reproduced the face as he carried it in memory from that happiest of days, but he also painted the same face as he conceived it to be then, in her mature and more developed life. He also reasoned out what she ought to be in life and riper character, and developed her in his mind into the embodiment of all that is true and lovely and beautiful. How he cherished this ideal being and gave it the purest and fullest affection of his nature. She was with him in his mind all the time, and in his lonely hours and hours of toil, she whispered words of strength and courage, and infused new hope and effort under every failure and defeat. She seemed his good angel by day and by night whose gentle loving influence held him back in times of fierce trials, and urged him forward when almost given over to despair. She beckoned him onward to the accomplishment of higher and better things. She was the soul of his genius, the muse of his lyre, and the inspiration of his better self. He saw her always in his mind as she was on that queen of days when she said: "The Lord is good, let us rejoice in Him, and give thanks to Him forever."

Tom looked forward with glad hope to the time when he should build his own comfortable home, and when Mae's presence and love should make it the happiest place in the world.

Love and obedience to God, and constant sweet communion with him should make it the house of God, and the dwelling place of the Most High, as He dwelt in them. It should be beautiful within and without. The wealth of nature's beauty should abound and lead their hearts up to him who had made all things beautiful.

During all these years of study Tom had been moved to prepare himself for the service of God in the ministry, and this aim had been stronger and higher than all others. He had recognized early in life the call of God into the ministry, and had answered that he was willing to put his entire being into the work. Everything else had been made secondary to this one purpose of life. The Lord opened before him the possibility of acquiring a good education, and he thankfully accepted it as from His hands. It was a glad thought to him that he was not his own, but belonged to Christ, and the ordering of his life and the guiding of his steps were of the Lord.

He studied the Bible to find the truth, and the will of the Lord, and to know all He commands, that he might do it. In this study he learned that the church of Christ in the Bible, was His body, and that none were really members of it except those who were in living union with Christ by the new birth, and by a living faith in Him. He reasoned that such members as these would rejoice in Christ as their Lord and Master and receive His Word as their only law of faith and practice and

that their love to Him would lead them to love each other, and obey Him faithfully and gladly in all things. He thought they would feel it to be their greatest privilege and highest honor to belong to the body of Christ. Their hearts would be knit together in love, and abounding in love and fellowship, they would live and work happily together; and the very house in which they met for worship would be dear to every heart, because of the presence of their Lord with them there.

Tom expected to live and labor among such people as these. He was sure the Bible warranted his expectation that Christ's people would believe the Bible, would love and obey it, and would love each other. They would obey Christ in their church belief and life; and surely none of them would ever be willing to lay aside the yoke of Christ and take upon them their old yoke of bondage again. He lived an ideal life, much alone, not taking the world as he found it; but reasoning out from given principles what he ought to be able to find in life. In this way he reasoned that the grand and glorious principles of the gospel would produce these happy results in the lives of all believers. All failures, he thought, result from the lack of proper teaching by which the Bible would be incorporated into the lives of Christians. He would so teach his people the doctrines of Christ, from the Bible, and develop them in spirituality that their lives and characters would clearly manifest what Christ can do in saving sinners, and

making them holy. This ideal Scriptural church was a source of much profitable study and he fully expected to realize it in his pastoral life.

During all his years of study, Tom never lost sight of the purposes formed in early life to build his ideal home, and the chief element in the making of this home, he thought, would be the presence of God joined with pure, refined, unselfish Christian love and companionship. He had ample means to build for comfort, and to adorn it with the beauties of art; but the one thing to make it home, was that Mae, the loveliest and best of Christian women, should dwell with him in it.

While it is true that Tom had known but little of the real character and life of Mae, and had but few facts out of which to form his conception of the high order of her loveliness; yet he remembered her friendship for him when a friendless orphan boy. When he thought of her sympathy, piety and prayers, he was sure that his conclusions were correct. He had lived all these years in the assurance of answered prayer; because in the days of his early youth he had earnestly prayed the Lord to give her to him as a companion, if according to His will, and for their mutual good. He had prayed till he received full and sweet assurance that she would be his; and had never seriously doubted that it should be so; and he had no fear that any one should win her from him. Bright visions of domestic happiness constantly rose before his mind,

which grew brighter as the years of study began to come to a close.

His work of preparation was ended at last, and Tom was on his way back to the home of his childhood, to meet this loveliest of women, the friend of his youth, the embodiment of his ideal, who had stimulated him to cultivate and develop himself into all that he had attained. Oh with what warmth he now loved this ideal woman! What grand possibilities of happiness and usefulness now seemed to be before him! How sweet the memory of those few delicious moments of young love, which had exerted such power over his entire life! Earth seemed so near to heaven, and much of Edens' pleasures seemed just before him as he returned home.

Through all those seven years he had loved her and had labored to make himself worthy of her love; and had patiently waited without seeing her face. Would he be able to convince her that he had outgrown his young undeveloped life? He was glad to remember the days when she had not been ashamed of him in his poverty, and had pledged her friendship to him even when he followed the plow. Now that he was no longer poor, and had removed all his former defects, would she not regard his suit and make him happy with her love?

Now that he was on his way to meet her, he thought to find her more mature, and some of her youthful bloom developed into more womanly loveliness. He himself had changed too; indeed, there was not much of his former

self left. His face was more mature and manly, his frame was well developed and strong; and he had matured into a well grown man. He had been growing all the while in every part, and he thought that Mae too had been making progress. He was so happy at the thought of meeting her!



CHAPTER VIII.

A Sad Awakening.

Tom's meeting with Mae was as the awakening out of an enchanting dream. It was on another May morning when all nature was fully alive, the whole earth was young, and all the trees clapped their hands in praise to God, and beauty and loveliness abounding everywhere told that God is good. Filled to overflowing with thanksgiving to God for His goodness and mercy, and remembering the days of past waiting and hope, Tom drove rapidly from the railroad to the home of his friend. There he found that Mae was teaching in the school of the town and he would have to wait her return at noon.

During these waiting hours Tom lived over much of the past of his early life. Long forgotten memories waked up and filled his mind. His early loss of mother and brother, the rest he found by coming to Christ with his heavy burden, the lonely farm life and its unsolved problems, the helpful study of his father's Bible, the struggles for an education, and the sympathetic and helpful girl friend, his poverty, struggles and prayer, all these and more came clearly to mind. He seemed to live over all of the past, and to see it in the light of what had already been accomplished by him through the kind Providence of God. He saw, too, that Mae had been in the Lord's hands, the means of making him what he was. She had stimulated and encouraged him by

her sympathy, and moved by what he believed her to be, he had labored to reach the high ideal which he had kept constantly before his mind. Then he had carried the image of her most lovely face in his mind during all the days of their separation; and now he was soon to meet her and look upon her face again. Would she be happy to meet him? Or would she still think of his poverty and undeveloped youth? Would he be able to win her respect and love, or would she forever remember him as he was when they last met?

While Tom was lost in these memories Mae came unannounced into the parlor. Their meeting was a trifle awkward, because of Tom's evident joy, and an expression on Mae's face which plainly told that she was not pleased to meet him. Tom felt that it was necessary to apologize for intruding upon her without her consent; but he was so happy to meet the friend and helper of his youth, as well as the daughter of his most valued brother and father in the ministry. He had promised him that he would hunt up his family when he returned, and be to them a son and brother.

Mae softened a little at the kind mention of her dear departed father, but it was evident that she dreaded the interview. Tom seemed conscious only of the fact that he was with Mae, the most loved friend and the embodiment of the ideal of his entire young life. He expressed his sympathy for her in the loss of her noble father, and alluded to that glorious May morning, told her of the purpose of

life formed that day, and would have told of the young, sweet love waked in his heart for her, and how it had entered into and controlled his life, but Mae interrupted him with a look of annoyance and disapproval, and excused herself that she might prepare for dinner.

The family with whom she boarded, knowing that Tom was an old friend just from college, and thinking to do her a favor, pressed him to remain with them for dinner. He was too much bewildered to decline; yet he was not conscious of any need for food. He had cultivated a high degree of self-control, and was able to converse freely with all the family. He gave the boys pleasant incidents of college life, explained to Mae the work of the Theological Seminary, and in a genial, kindly way made the dinner hour glow with genuine good humor. Every one seemed highly pleased with Mae's friend, except herself. She was ill at ease; but her friends mistook her feelings for embarrassment by the presence of her handsome young friend.

When the dinner hour was over Tom asked Mae to let him have an engagement with her sometime between then and eight o'clock that evening, as he wanted to see her before he met a business engagement. She set the time, and returned to her work asking him to remain till she came back.

When Mae had gone Tom had time to pull his thoughts together, and he was like one waking out of a stupor, nothing seemed real. The charm of his ideal of beauty and loveliness

had been rudely broken. The sweet, beautiful face he had carried in his mind all these days was not real, the meek and lovely spirit and true character were not now so exalted as he had believed. The voice once so calm, sweet, trusting and melodious, now sounded harsh and defiant; the pure, confiding spirit was distrustful and bitter; a frown of discontent had disfigured one of the loveliest faces in the world. Mae really seemed another person, and truly she was altogether a different woman from what she once was, and what she might have been.

Tom had reasoned that from Mae's love for Christ, having a new heart, knowing the Bible, being led by the Spirit, living a true Christian life, and cultivating the graces of the Spirit, she would have grown very lovely in her entire self; yet he had found her so different from what he expected. Fortunately he was too much surprised by the discovery to take in the full situation. He felt sure that Mae even then was a superior woman, if she was not the grand ideal of excellence which he had expected. Could he love this Mae whom he found in the flesh; and could she ever learn to love him? These questions came up; but his awakening had been so sudden and bitter that he could decide nothing, and had to await developments.

Tom was now dreading to meet Mae as much as she could dread to meet him, but the matter must be settled in some way, and he waited and prayed for guidance from the Lord.

Mae met him with an air of firm resolution; and with seeming little feeling referred to their last meeting. She thought this meeting would have disabused his mind of any false notions concerning herself.

He told her that he had kept the meeting of that May morning in mind, and had never known till that last meeting in June half how dear she was to him. He had never felt that she was to be blamed for what she did. He was then poor, undeveloped, ignorant, and his appearance was unrefined and he did not wonder that she was not pleased with his rough exterior. But he determined then that he would make himself worthy of her love, and came back to seek it. He had carried her lovely face with him ever since, and it would remain in his heart as long as he lived. He had loved her for her own true loveliness, and her life and character had helped him to a better life.

Mae grew more and more impatient, and said that she had dreaded this for a long time. She had made up her mind on that June day, and had never wished to change it. She had known too much of the hardships of a preacher's wife to ever consent to bear them. She had learned in her father's home what it was to live on a scant and beggarly salary, while her father was expected to do the work of two men. She had almost suffered death from shame and indignation while the members of his church complained of his failure to visit, the length of his sermons and he could

never please them in anything; while her mother had been imposed upon as if she had been hired and paid for that purpose.

The pastor was expected to give all his time to the spiritual service of his people; and they estimate their spiritual welfare so low that they promise a very small salary and often withheld a part of it. She had rebelled against that kind of life seven years ago, and had purposely kept away from Tom that he might not be tempted to waver in his calling. She had hoped to have been saved from these bitter statements; but Tom's frankness had demanded that she should be equally frank.

Tom answered sadly: "O, Mae, I never thought that you could ever feel in such way about any thing you might be called upon to suffer for Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us, and bore our sins for us on the cross!"

She said that it was not the things she had borne for Christ which caused her to come to her determination; but it was those things which she had suffered from the unfeeling professed Christians in the church. If it had been for Christ, she could have borne it gladly; but there was no Christianity in requiring the pastor to labor for a starvation salary, and withhold it till the end of the year; and then unjustly keep back a large portion of that from his family.

Her father had supplied his home with plenty before he gave himself fully to the pastorate; but when he had spent his time,

strength and home in the service of the churches, he was left in old age, almost helpless, to starve. Had it not been that the Lord stirred up the heart of some unknown friend to relieve his necessities he would have died in the deepest want. She did not believe that she had been called to that kind of life.

Tom asked: "May it not be that you are fighting against the past providences of God, and in rebellion against his dealings with you?"

She said: "I think not. I believe it is rebellion against the stingy, covetousness of professing Christians. They profess to belong to Christ, and they sing:

'All that I am, and all I have,
Shall be forever thine;
What e'er my duty bids me give,
My cheerful hands resign.'

yet they grudgingly contribute a small part of their gains to feed their pastor and his family; and then complain because he sends his children to college, even at the sacrifice of home comforts. I am fully resolved never to submit to that kind of bondage any more."

After some silence, Tom said he expected to make his own support while he preached to the churches, and developed and built them up; and he asked that she would consent to share that kind of life with him.

She would consent to teach with him; but not to share his lot, nor labor for churches. In her lonely life work, she would be glad to

feel that her father's friend was her friend; but she could encourage no other hope.

Tom said: "Mae, I will give you my purest and truest friendship, and will manifest only the love of a friend, if possible; but do tell me, that some day, I may hope to win your love, and that you may become my wife, when all barriers have been removed. I have loved you too well and too long to give you up now. I have waited and labored seven years to make myself in some way worthy to offer you as a companion, and I will labor seven more to win your love, if you will only give me the faintest hope; for my life will be incomplete and empty without you.

"I fear not," answered Mae. "I am not the person you have loved all those years. That sweet May rose was nipped in the bud and has never blown, and I fear it never will. At that very hour a cruel worm of injustice was gnawing at its root, and it wilted and died. Had my father's church paid his salary I should have gone through college, and have been fully prepared for my life work. But that year crops were short, and business rather dull, and much of his salary was withheld, and I was called home. It was that crushing disappointment which embittered my life, and decided my course on that dark day in June.

"I know that my Saviour is true and I am trying to be true to Him; but it is the wrongs of His professed people that has worked me this hurt. Church members profess to be Christians, yet many of them seem not to know

the first principles of common honesty; because they received my father's time and labor and withheld his support, and when he grew old and feeble, and had spent himself and all he had for them, they left him to starve. There was enough unpaid salary due him to have educated his children, and then have filled his last days with comfort."

In deep tenderness Tom said: "Mae, you truly are not what you would have been had you gone on as you were from that happy hour, yet you may be even more. The trials of life educate and develop us as well as the sunshine of prosperity. But I fear for your Christian joy; there is too much bitterness in your feelings to let in the sunlight of love, joy and peace. I believe that I can say to you honestly, if I knew your life would be more happy without me, than with me, I would not wish to make you in any way less happy, even though I know that my own life will be void of happiness without you. Only permit me to love you, and help you back to a happier life. It will make my own life brighter and better. Let me say to you that you need only to return to your first love of Christ, and faith in God."

"I fear that I have failed to trust God as I once did, and all because the worm, which His providence sent, has killed the gourd vine of my ambition. I have by nature a large ambition, and in many respects it has been carnal and worldly. I wanted the wealth of this world, because it would make me more

independent, and free me from all the cares and trials of life, and it would separate me from the low and vulgar. I thought I had been made for something higher than to eat and sleep, and toil my life away for the sake of simply satisfying my bodily needs. Yet here I find myself like Sampson, shorn of the locks of my strength, and in blind helplessness compelled to grind out my daily bread in the mills of my enemies. I feel that my wings have been broken and like the eagle, I am caged here in my poverty, beating the life out of myself in this endless toil and worry. I remember all the time that it was the stinginess and unfaithfulness of my father's church that broke my wings and caged me here for life. How can I help being bitter? They withheld my education, by keeping back the wages of my father who labored for them. My life work is made narrow by their unhallowed greed. My knowledge of music is not full, and I am not perfect enough in the languages and sciences, to accept the principal's position in the school; and my lessons in art are far from satisfactory to myself. All of this comes from the fact that his church was not honest enough to pay its debt of honor. I am sorry to feel so bitter against people who profess to be Christians, but the iron has entered my very soul, and I am writhing in almost mortal pain from it all the time. The injustice of their dealings has been great, and my father and his family were reduced to the deepest poverty and they cared not as much for

the old minister, worn out in their service, as they would for the beast that plowed their fields or watched their homes by night. When he grew too feeble to serve them more, he was pushed off into the world to starve and die alone, without even a kindly word from any one. Oh, that I had the patience and meekness of my father, that I might bear these wrongs with the same martyr spirit that was in him! But I can see nothing but its manifest injustice and sin."

In a tone of deep sympathy and kindness Tom said: "Mae, my friend, there have been great and serious mistakes made in the Lord's service many times, and terrible results have followed, though the mistakes have been honest. The best friend I had in my youth, your honored and beloved father, made a mistake early in his ministry which resulted in all of this wrong and hurt."

"What mistake did my father make?" asked Mae with a tone indicating that she was hurt, if not offended.

In a calm, tender voice, Tom continued: "His mistake was this: he had a comfortable and lovely home, adorned with luxurious taste, and liberally supplied with all the good things which God has given us richly to enjoy. His farm was well tilled, and yielded both comforts and wealth. His wife was beautiful, happy and contented; and his children were well taught, healthy and promising. His church promised and paid an ample salary to compensate him for his labor. The church

was strong, growing and happy, feeling that they had the best pastor in the land. The members paid more to their ability for evangelizing the world than any other church around them. The Lord's blessings seemed to rest upon pastor and people; and their hearts were all knit together in love. But into this fair Eden came the tempter one day in the garb of a minister of Christ. There was too much happiness, love and successful work for the Lord to please the wicked one, and he sent an influential preacher into your father's home to spend the night. He was charmed with the Eden like happiness he found there, and enjoyed beyond measure the loving hospitality extended him. The beauty, elegance and contentment of the home, the care and success of the farm, all filled the great man with delight. But he had ridden many miles that day to convince Brother Allen that it was unscriptural and he was doing wrong to require a stipulated sum from his church as salary. This great preacher was strongly tinctured with anti-missionary principles; and he made it his chief business to oppose and hinder all the enterprises of church work. He had inherited a large property, and had managed it fairly well; and as he professed to believe that sending the gospel to the heathen is wrong, and that churches should not pay their pastors any stipulated amounts, he had hoarded all he made, and used none of it for Christ.

"They talked till late that night, and when

his driver harnessed his fine horses, and he entered his elegant carriage, and drove away, he had planted the seeds of all these wrongs, and trials and sorrows. He had prevailed upon your father to promise that he would exact no stipulated sum as salary for his preaching.

"For several years this church paid well, as the result of former training, and their great love for their pastor. Then the farm work went on very well; for he could afford to pay a good man to look after it. But from the first year his church began to wane; the more covetous held back part, and their contributions decreased till they gave but little for any department of the cause of Christ.

"They soon embued the false idea that pastors are to preach to the churches at their own charges and if the churches contribute any thing to their support it is pure charity, as they are to pay them nothing for their services but may give them something, if they feel like it. This theory taught them that they were under no divine authority to pay their pastor for his work, but only to give him what ever they pleased, anything or nothing. It reduced the pastor to the level of a beggar, and compelled him to live on the charity of his people. They were left free to give to him or to withhold, and they soon reached the place where they gave only enough to excite their own contempt, and that of others for a beggared ministry; and the fact that the pastor believed it the true principle, and taught it to his people,

only increased their failure to appreciate the value of his services. His salary began soon to decrease, and finally it went down to almost nothing; and his church began to die from disobedience; and neither he nor his church were ever the same from that day."

"Your facts are all true; but father was in no sense an anti-missionary. I simply state it to free him from any seeming charge to that effect," said Mae.

"No, he was not, and yet he did hold with them in this thing, and he so taught his church, and his first advice to me was to never demand any fixed salary from my churches; but preach the gospel to them, and trust the Lord for a support. I never agreed with him on this matter, and insisted that I should surely teach my churches that I was not a pauper, living upon their begrudged charities, while I gave them the best work of my life. I would teach them that if I planted to them spiritual things, the Lord says, it is a small matter if I receive for it of their temporal things. But the last time I was with him he told me plainly of his mistake with his people. He had been praying over the decline among them, and seeking whereby he might prevent it, and also stay his own financial difficulties. He had prayed that the hearts of his people might be stirred up as to his support, that he might the better educate his children, but the prayer seemed to be unanswered and he felt that it might be contrary to the Lord's will, and gave it up, and prayed for wisdom and grace to

bear it. While he thus prayed, it appeared to him that he had been asking the Lord to do just what He sent him to do. It was his duty to teach them to do all things the Lord had commanded; and they would have done their duty if they had been properly taught. But he had taught them that they need not do this. Yet, God says that He has ordained that they that preach the gospel shall live of the gospel. Christians are to lay by in store on the first day of the week, as the Lord has prospered them. He had been misled by the passage, where we have received freely, and are to give freely. He urged me to take up his work and teach them, and undo his mistake if possible. Teach them to give as unto Christ, and to his cause; and that he will give unto them good measure, heaped up and running over. It was true of them when they were faithful, and it was true of him. He prayed most earnestly that this people might be taught by me to do their duty, and that they might be led in the way of obedience. I believe that prayer will be answered, and that this wilderness will blossom as the rose."

With deep feeling Mae said: "That same preacher came to our home only a short time before it was sold. He said he had turned aside to spend the night, and to see how it went with Brother Allen; but he could hardly believe it was the same place, and the same family he had met before. Father was away in a meeting. He asked mother why the

evidence of thrift and success were gone. The place had gone down; and mother looked careworn, faded and prematurely old. He wanted to know what had caused their downfall, and had brought their happy Eden-like home into this premature decay, and what could have caused such a blight to have fallen upon them. With tears streaming down her faded cheeks mother told him it was all the result of the failure of her husband's church to pay him anything for his services. While he had tried to preach and tend the farm, too, they had fallen in debt; and had struggled long and hard to pay the debt, but it would not be long until the home and farm would have to go to satisfy it, and they would be thrown on the world without a home or a support. Hardships had broken down her own health, and had made both herself and her husband prematurely old."

The old man trembled from deep emotion as he said: "My sister, I am afraid that I am to blame for all of your troubles; for I persuaded him that it was wrong to require the promise of a fixed amount as salary for his preaching. He was doing well when I found him. Strange that he should have gone down so fast."

Mother said: "He was doing the Lord's work in the Lord's own way and his blessings were resting upon him; you led him out of the Lord's way into your way and trouble came of it. You can look round and see what your way of working has brought; and you can

judge the tree by the fruit; the principles by the results."

The old man's eyes were moist as he turned to go and he said: "I see it is all wrong; the fruit is bad, and the principle must be evil some how."

"The Lord has been very good to you, and has stood by you, and helped you in all your day of trials," said Tom, "and He has given you success far beyond many others with better educational advantages. He has enabled you to support your mother, and educate the younger children, till they are now almost able to take care of themselves. You ought to be able now to begin to widen out your own education, and to make up many of your earlier deficiencies. I applied, some weeks since, for the place of principal in your school, and if the Lord sees fit to give it to me, I shall take great pleasure in reviewing all the languages, sciences and higher mathematics with you. Then we may review our lessons in art, and prepare to carry the study higher if talents and opportunity permits."

Mae's almost happy reply was: "I will be so glad to avail myself of your aid to perfect my college course; but what will you do about your preaching, if you teach? You surely do not think the Lord wants a secularized ministry do you? I advise you to remember Jonah."

Tom said: "Mae, as much as I love you, I would not on your account wander one single hair's breadth from what I feel to be my duty to my Master. I know that to attempt to

save my life would be to lose it; but I shall preach; this is the end unto which I was born into the kingdom of Christ; for this I have studied all these years; but I have no preaching open to me yet. I will teach, and make a living, and preach any where the Lord may direct. I have committed my way unto the Lord, and He will direct my steps."



CHAPTER. IX.

Life As It Is.

The evening twilight was gathering over the earth when Tom left Mae to seek his room at the hotel. He was to meet the trustees of the school that night; and before he did so, he shut the door and prayed to his Father who seeth in secret, telling Him of his desires and asking if consistent with His divine will and purpose to give him the place he sought. He prayed that Mae might become all that he had so fondly believed her to be. He also prayed for the building up of a pure and faithful church of Christ; and that the Lord would enable him to take up his old friend's work, correct his mistakes, and develop the church into one of the best in the land. Especially did he plead for the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit, and before rising from prayer he realized that the Lord was with him, and was assured that he would be able to accomplish all that was best for him and for the cause of Christ in the place.

As he passed out the hotel clerk gave him a note from Mae, containing a beautiful bouquet of rare and lovely flowers, stating that she had prayed that he might obtain the place, if the Lord was willing that he should teach.

The board was evidently well pleased with their man, and gave him the place at a good salary; and he was to begin work at once. During this interview an old gentleman asked if he was not a preacher, and of what church.

He answered that he was a Baptist, and hoped to resurrect the Baptist church in the town and make it a power for good. The old man expressed his regrets that Baptists were not more aggressive in the town, as their church was dying from stagnation.

When alone in his room that night Tom sat down to collect his thoughts. He felt as one awakened from a most delightful dream, to find himself shivering in the cold and darkness of a lonely night. How dreadfully dark and miserable life seemed at that hour! He had lived an imaginary, rather than a real life; and here he had waked to find it all a dream, and he was in the world alone, unloved, and his ideal a failure. Mae was not the gloriously perfect and exalted being he had supposed; her transcendent beauty had faded, the loveliness of her Christian character had been tarnished by the evils of life. His ideal woman was no longer lifted up high above all others; and his ideal home was now a failure; and it seemed impossible to gather up the fragments of his imaginary life and make anything out of them worth living for in real life. The glamor of youth, which had covered his eyes so long, had been brushed away by that day's revelations, and he no longer lived a charmed ideal life. He was sick at heart, a dark, choking despondency took possession of him. He was disappointed and dissatisfied with life. Was this the end for which he had labored so long? And was this the reward for all of his love? He had labored to make himself

worthy of the best love and companionship of the most perfect of women; and here he was scorned and set aside by her whom he had loved so long. She seemed to care naught for him, his love was an offense, and he was expected to offer simple friendship to her who scorned his purest, deepest love! He was almost desperate.

It was well for Tom that he was already bound by contract to remain and take up the burdens of real life; or in his fit of despondency he would probably have fled from the place which held so much unhappiness for him. To his mind it seemed selfish and heartless in Mae to be willing to see him suffer untold pain on her account; and not even utter one word of sympathy for him. A wave of deep bitterness was forcing itself over him. He had lived and labored in vain. Life had mocked him. Life was dark and drear, and there seemed little left to labor for. What could he look forward to in the dark and dreary way stretched out before him, over which he must pass alone? It seemed better to have gone home from that glad and glorious May morning, or even now, than to bear the burden of an unloved and lonely life.

He remembered the melancholy of the lonely days he had spent in poverty on the farm in the days of his youth. He saw the star of hope rise upon his life when a pure hearted, Christian girl bid him take heart again. Her sympathy, friendship and prayers had caused him to take heart. Then that golden morning

when this queen of women had waked in his heart a glowing flame of purest love, and an undying purpose of life, to make himself worthy of her and win her love. When he remembered her contempt for his love his misery seemed too heavy for him to bear.

His life of sweet trust in God and his loving intimate reliance upon Him in all his troubles came to his help at this time, and on his knees he poured out his soul before the Lord in earnest prayer. He told the burden of his disappointment, and the sorrow which seemed too heavy for him to bear, into the ears of the Lord, saying: "Lord Jesus, I come to Thee for rest. I am burdened and heavy laden, almost beyond endurance. Thou hast said call upon Thee in the time of trouble, and Thou wilt deliver us, and we shall glorify Thee. I am in deep trouble and I call upon Thee. For Thy name's sake hear me, and deliver me, and I will glorify Thee." As he thus prayed the darkness all melted away, and light burst over his spirit, and sweet peace filled his whole being. He realized that God was with him, and his life could not be lonely, nor a failure.

He found himself able to look life, with all its trials and disappointments, squarely in the face. He would take life as he found it, real, earnest life; and labor to make it what it ought to be. He would labor to bring his own life and his church up to his ideal. Seek to find out what his church really was, and then labor to make it what it ought to be. The rule of his life should be, take things as

they really are and labor to make them what they ought to be.

He trembled from deep emotion when it came to him as a sudden inspiration, that he might take Mae also, just as she was, and by the Lord's help through tender, loving, patient work enable her to become all he had thought her to be. She was in many respects more than he had expected; as she had been developed by trials in self-reliance, independence, and many other strong traits of character. He was resolved by the means of grace, the Spirit of grace and the Word of God and by kind and loving efforts to leave nothing undone which might develop her into his high and perfect ideal. He put his new purpose before the Lord, and asked for wisdom and help to accomplish it, if the will of the Lord; and he was strengthened and was happy in the Lord.

At the same time, Mae had found herself strangely affected after her long talk with Tom. She had been brought to see her life in its true light, and its fearful selfishness had forced itself upon her mind with wonderful power. Because the sins of others had abounded her love for Christ and His cause had grown cold, and she had forsaken her first love. While she sat in the fading twilight, wrapt in deepest thought, not only her past life came to mind, with all of its unhappy, dark days of discontent and unrest, but also her friend's ideal of what she might have been. All these years of separation he had thought of

her as she truly might have been, had she grown in grace and in the knowledge of Christ and His Word. As she compared Tom as he was with what she found him, she was ashamed of her progress. She had drifted down the current far below the place where a kind Providence had put her by the influence and blessings of a refined and pious home; while Tom had plied the oars of opportunity and pressed up the stream far beyond the point where he had found her. She could hardly believe him to be the same person who had existed in her mind only as a bright, good fellow, doomed to spend his life in the service of people who would deem him their enemy because he told them the truth. She had supposed that he would be a man of poor health, scholarly brow and a burdened look. She had thought of him as living a life of poverty and want, having no certain dwelling place; yet laboring harder than the men who accumulate wealth and fame, while he was regarded as a failure in life. She had felt that she had no call nor preparation for such a life, and had made up her mind that she would never share it with any man.

Her mind was busy, and the conviction came to her that she was as far wrong in ideal of Tom as he had been in his of her. She saw him as a minister of God, who by large growth and full development had been preparing himself for real, faithful work for Christ. Was it not true that she might have gone on towards perfection as well as he?

Could she not rouse herself now to her better interests and attain to much that was yet possible? Ought not she for the sake of his true, pure, elevated love strive to make herself what he believed her to be? She would strive to make herself what he loved. If he secured the place he sought in the school, she would have his example and influence as well as his instructions to help her to a better life; and who could tell but that in time to come Tom might realize his precious ideal. Her whole being seemed to glow with delight as these thoughts came to her mind. This appeared to her as the last great opportunity of her life, and she would not throw it away. Under the inspiration of this purpose she sought the Lord in prayer for his success and wrote the note and sent the flowers, feeling that they would tell of her feelings as she dared not otherwise tell.

Could Tom have known Mae's thoughts then how much of darkness and sorrow to both could have been turned aside. She had already seen that her father's mistake had been the cause of all her troubles, and that her fearful resentment was far from being just against the people who had been mistaught, and undeveloped in their duty to the Lord. She also had felt the uplift of a true and earnest Christian life and the inspiration of a high and noble purpose, and the selfishness of her past life melted under the pure influence of his Christian life and love. What would poverty amount to if she could only help make others

rich by saving them from the ruin of sin to the glorious blessings of the saved? If she could help make others rich in the forgiveness of sins, peace with God, hope of heaven, likeness to Christ, comfort of the Spirit, fullness of God, riches of grace, and glories of heaven, she would count it no hardship to be poor.

She repented of all her rebellion of the past, and prayed most earnestly that she might return again out of her spiritual bondage. She spent much of that night in prayer, and realized a nearness to the Lord that she had not felt for years. She gave herself fully to the Lord; and determined that if Tom was in love with an ideal woman, she would strive to reach his ideal, so that he would really love her.

It was understood that Tom would preach at the Baptist church on Sunday, and all the Baptists in the town were requested to attend as he purposed to arrange for regular services. A short notice in the town paper stated that he had come to take up the work their old pastor had given up. He had promised his old friend that he would come back and take it up, and by the Lord's help would try to do all he had wanted to do.

The morning after his election Tom was at the Academy ready to begin work. As he entered the hall Mae saw her lovely flowers, and was pleased with the effect of their delicate beauty as they blended with the calm, peacefulness of his happy, sunny face. Mae met him with a sweet smile, much more like her old self than she knew, and introduced him

to the other teachers. His greetings were kind and friendly, and they were all pleased with him from the first. He took up the reins of control in the school with perfect ease; and none seemed to contest his rights. He had such high conceptions of the possibilities of education that he inspired all about him with its great importance; and caused them to feel that he was their true friend, and in the very deepest sympathy with their true welfare.

When school was over the first day Mae asked if he did not think he might be doing wrong in giving himself up to teaching instead of giving himself wholly to preaching? He told her it might be so; but he had no preaching to do, except a kind of free missionary work; and like Paul, he would work with his own hands and supply his necessities, while he preached. Besides, he was not so sure that every preacher ought to confine himself to the salary he receives from his church; especially if he is able to supplement it by any line of work which would not interfere too much with his ministerial work. There is no need that a man spend his life for a mere support when he can prevent it by some other work in a proper direction. He thought that many preachers were tending to the opposite extreme from which our fathers had emerged. They had all been so secularized that they gave the strength of their lives to making a living, and then preached the best they could without study. We are studying all the time, and are too dependent upon salary. This is causing

too many applicants for the strong places, and causes the preacher to be less manly and independent. He would make a living, and develop his church. Mae seemed troubled; but Tom could not explain further.



CHAPTER X.

Correcting a Mistake.

The Baptist church doors had been closed for several years, except as some minister passed by and preached for them. When they had attempted to settle a pastor the arrangement would be broken up as soon as he wanted the church to name the amount she would pay for his services. Brother Allen had not charged them for preaching, and they wanted to call their pastor, and not hire him. But the man could not be found who was able and willing to labor for them and support himself, and their church doors had been closed for the most part since the old pastor died.

The members were all out to meet the young preacher. Many of them remembered him; and they had heard that he promised the old pastor to come back and take up his work, and build up the church. Now he had come to them, and the more spiritually minded of them were happy, because they were longing, even fainting for the courts of the Lord's house.

Tom read where Elijah, the prophet, repaired the altar of the Lord that had been broken down. He told them he had come to live with them, and wanted to rebuild the altar of the Lord in that place, and keep up His service. He wanted to know who among them was on the Lord's side. There are but two sides, the Lord's and Satan's, and all are on one or the other. The Lord is for truth, righteousness, mercy and salvation; Satan is

for sin, unrighteousness and ruin. Where were they in heart and where in life? With the Lord or with Satan?

Christ lived on earth a life of self-denial, cross-bearing and consecration and obedience to the will of God, and all who are on His side are required to follow Him, and live as He lived. He also told them that the new heart, as the work of the Holy Spirit, the new life of the saved, obedience to the commands of Christ, labor for the salvation of the lost, and the glories of heaven, were all on the Lord's side. Then he told of the work of Satan, the ruin of souls, misery of sin, ungodly and worldly lives, selfishness and disobedience to God, and opposition to all that is good and pure and true. Now if the Lord be God, serve him, and do not mix his service with that of Satan. He exhorted them to come out fully on the Lord's side and render to Him true and faithful service, doing His commands from the heart in love.

The Lord was with them, and the word was blessed to many, and with tears of repentance they turned to the Lord, and called Tom to serve them as pastor. An old brother expressed himself as being exceedingly happy in having their young brother to come back and take up Brother Allen's work. It was almost the same as having his own son to take his place. He felt sure that Tom would know how to carry on the work just as their old pastor had done.

After other kind and complimentary talks

by the members, Tom told them that he would answer their call to serve them as their pastor as soon as the church decided what amount they could pay for his services. They had asked him to work for them, and as honest men they surely did not expect his labor for nothing. He made no charges, but expected them to consult together and see what they were able and willing to pay. He was already at work for some of them, teaching their children and preparing them for coming life, and there was no more reason that they should ask him to work for them for nothing in the church than in the schoolroom.

An old brother was opposed to promising anything. He wanted the church to call and not hire her pastor. Brother Allen had served them the greater part of his life, and he had never sold them the gospel, but given it to them free. He had hoped that they had found a true pastor who was called of God to the preaching of the gospel, and not a hireling pastor. He wanted the preacher to withdraw his demand for hire, or the church to withdraw its call. For his part, he did not believe that the true call and the hiring ever went together. Others agreed with him, and said that they had understood that Tom was to take up Brother Allen's work, and carry it on in the same way that he had, and he had never demanded any pay for preaching the gospel.

Tom stood up and said: "My brethren, I can not withdraw my condition, that you pay me a salary for my work. I will give the church

all the time they need to talk over the matter and agree upon a sum, but I can never be your pastor unless you make up an amount and promise it as salary. You are fully able as a church to pay for what service you may require, and I am not willing to live on the charity of the church while I am able to work for a living. I am willing to render you service, if you are willing to pay me for my work, and will answer your call when you have made up your minds as to what amount you will pay. The Lord says that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and He has ordained that they who preach the gospel shall live of it, as those who ministered in the temple lived from the support of the temple.

“Our aged brother referred to Brother Allen’s long service of the church for nothing; he told me just before his death that he made the mistake of his life in trying to bear all the burdens of his church, instead of teaching them to bear their part. He was prosperous, and his home was well supplied and happy while he insisted upon and received a definite salary. But he was influenced by one who believed in calling and not hiring a pastor, to give up his demand for a fixed amount as salary. The result was that his church almost died, and the pastor’s beautiful home, and his farm, were sold for debt, his children were deprived of their means for an education, he and his wife grew prematurely old and wore their lives away by hardships and over-work, and the church knows that the dear man wore his life

out by over-work and hardships. One of the loveliest and most Eden-like homes I ever saw was destroyed by this church withholding the salary due, because he did not demand it. If the church had continued to pay what was justly due him, he would no doubt have been alive and happily at work for them today, as he was many years younger than our aged brother who is so much opposed to paying the hire of the laborer who preaches for him. His salary would have been a small matter for the whole church, each member paying his part, and it would have supplied his needs, paid his debts, and freed his mind from care. None can ever tell the terrible load he carried, nor the unutterable grief and anguish he suffered, as he saw the privations of his wife and children, while he was unable to supply their needs, and as he saw his beautiful home going down, and finally sold from under them to meet the debts made to supply them with food. In anguish of soul he cried unto his God, and asked that he might see the dreadful cause which had led him to such want. His eyes were opened and he saw plainly that he had disobeyed his Lord's command to teach his people to do all the things he had commanded them to do. He had failed to teach them to lay by them in store on the first day of the week as the Lord had prospered them, to sustain the gospel at home and spread it abroad. The Lord never intended for the pastor to bear all the burdens and the church go free; but that every one should bear his part of the load.

“When he saw his mistake it was too late for him to correct it; for as soon as he began to teach the church their duty, many of them were offended and talked of making a change. The church suffered this godly man, who had spent his life, his fortune and his home for them, to suffer and die among strangers. No, my brethren, I am not going to help the church perpetuate that mistake any longer. If the Lord will grant you repentance for starving one of the purest and best men who ever lived, destroying his usefulness, robbing his children of their righteous support, their lovely home, their estate, their education, and most of all, of one of the best fathers who ever lived, then you must go back to keeping house for him in a repentant way.”

When he finished his talk, a brother rose and said he did not feel that he was worthy to be called a member of the church, but he had never felt right about the way they treated their old pastor. The church had never prospered since they quit supporting the gospel. There had been but little spirituality among them, no sympathy and Christian love, but a general coldness towards the Lord, and an indifference towards each other, and neglect of all Christian duties. The church had been but little help to the unsaved, and their young people were left alone to go to ruin. He wanted them to repent of the wrong they had done as a church, and to start right in the service of God. He was willing to pay liberally on the present salary, and he would pay a good large

amount to settle up the old debt of the church. The majority of the church agreed with him, a good salary was made up for the pastor, and a large amount to pay off the old debt, but there was a goodly number of the members who opposed paying any salary at all. They were willing to give Tom some money if he needed it. But he told them that he was not a pauper by any means, and therefore would never live on their charity. The laborer is worthy of his hire.

At night he accepted the call and preached from the text: "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Many a Christian's soul thrilled with joy as he told of Christ, our Substitute, paying our ransom with His own precious blood. Because of His deep love for us He became responsible for our sins, and their punishment was laid upon Him, and He suffered it in full. He satisfied the law, and put them under grace, and there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ. He was made to be sin for them that they might be made the righteousness of God in Him. The believer in Christ is accepted of God in Him for time and eternity, and Christ is responsible for his entire life.

He urged that the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of grace brought such great and eternal blessing to believers, that they should love and glorify Him in all they do, and they should "walk worthy unto all well pleasing unto God."

At the close of the sermon many of the members gave the pastor the hand and asked that he pray that they might be able to lead an obedient and faithful Christian life. Mae was at the organ, and they all joined in singing

“Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head,
For such a worm as I?”

When they reached the words:

“Here Lord, I give myself away;”

Mae broke down and wept. Her eyes had been running over with tears during the sermon and the song; but here she gave up herself fully to the Lord. Many others were weeping and they all shook hands with each other, as well as with the pastor, and pledged themselves anew to the Lord, and to each other as brethren, and to their pastor to labor with him in the Lord. Even many who opposed paying the pastor joined in the general handshaking. They all bowed in earnest prayer that the joys of salvation might be restored, and they might be able to teach transgressors the ways of the Lord, and sinners might be converted unto the Lord.

As they left the church that night Mae said to Tom: “Jesus has done so much for me, and I have done so little for Him; but I feel tonight that I give myself anew to Him. When a child I sought and found peace with God

through faith in Christ; but I have wandered far from His service, and have come far short of my duty to Him. My feet had well nigh slipped and my steps were almost gone, but now I am standing on the solid rock. He has established my goings, and has put a new song in my mouth, even praises to my God. I do want to live closer to Christ than I have ever yet lived. I felt tonight that as Christ loved me and gave himself for me, I would fully give myself to Him. I would rebel against Him no more; but whatever He would have me do, I will gladly undertake for Him."

They seemed to be drawn closer to each other as they talked of Jesus and His love; and planned for His service in the church and town. Mae was deeply burdened for the conversion of her brothers and sisters, and there were others for whom they agreed to pray.

Mae had heard that a member named Luckey had been at work to prevent Tom from serving the church as pastor, and had gathered a good large following. She was the more troubled about it, because it was much the same crowd who had worked her father out of the pastorate. Their object was to get up so much opposition that Tom would give up to prevent a split in the church.

But Tom thought a split might be the only means by which the trouble could be healed. If they would all go out then there would be unity in the church, and she could build up on the true principles of godliness. The division would take out all the dead weight of uncon-

verted and unprogressive members, and remove all opposition to the welfare of the church, and would likely be a great blessing. The church would then be at rest, and have peace, and be able to labor unhindered for souls. He was sure that the opposition was fighting against God and His will and purpose, and that they would find it an unequal fight. They promised to pray that the opposition should not be permitted to hinder the work of the Lord.

Tom felt that night that there was a new sweetness in life. It was a joy to labor in the Lord and realize His help; and to have the precious sympathy and co-operation of the Lord's people in His work was also a cause for joy. It is true that this divided, dead and contending church was very far from the perfect model church he had pictured in his mind for so many years, yet it needed teaching and developing up into its highest possibility. It made his heart light since he was sure of the confidence, sympathy and love of his people. They were willing and ready to do their part of the work and he felt sure the Lord was with him in his work.

Then it was a source of happiness to know that Mae was in full sympathy with him in his work. She seemed so much like she did on that memorable day when she won his heart; and he felt again the same sweet school girl influence over him, as when she bid him take courage and try again, for he could surely succeed by the Lord's gracious help. He told himself over and over that there must be

hope for him now, for she had lost all her unforgiving spirit, and had given herself up fully to Christ.

He could scarcely restrain himself from pressing his suit again; but there was something in her voice and manner which seemed to plead with him for protection. So he lifted his heart in prayer and thanksgiving, and put the whole matter, with the opposition in his church, into the hands of his God.



CHAPTER XI.

Man Shall Live by Every Word of God.

Tom was as much at home in the school room as in the pulpit. He was self possessed, firm but kind, and controlled without effort, or even seeming to know that he did so. In a short time he made the entire school feel that he sought their good, and wanted only to benefit them. All spirit of insubordination was banished, and the school was raised to a high standard of excellence.

On the day following the preaching when school was out Mae asked to see Tom, and excitedly requested him, in some way, to stop the contribution the church was making for her mother and family. He told her it was impossible to stop it as the money was already in the bank to her credit. He advised her to take it and use it, for it was just and right that they should. The church had withheld many times more than that amount from her parents, and now in a spirit of true repentance they offered this to help undo the wrong they had done. He suggested that her mother accept the money, and buy the house where she boarded, and keep a few boarders and send the children to school. The matter was discussed at some length, and Mae decided to buy the house.

Her mother came and they were all happy to be together once more. She would have him leave the hotel and board with her, and

he was glad of the privilege to be a member of her sweet home. While much of the wealth of her old lovely home was gone, yet the same sweet peace, godliness and loving content were there. The Lord still came and dwelt with them; and they sought to please Him in all things.

Mae began to study under his instruction such branches as she had failed to complete in college. She was fond of music and painting, but had not been able to carry either to the degree of perfection she wished. Tom had studied art under a real master, and had made wonderful progress, and Mae was glad to avail herself of this instruction. Tom was hopeful at times that he might win her heart back to himself, but most of the time he was in despair; for if he even hinted at such a thing she would seem offended. At times he would sit lost in the deepest thought, trying to understand. Why was it that he loved this woman with such unwavering affection? Evidently she did not love him. Was she really worthy of such love? Yet she seemed to him more precious than all the world besides. Was the cause in her intrinsic value, or was it the result of his own nature? He felt that he loved her because he could not help it. She was more precious to him than he had really known till he began to despair of ever winning her heart. Sometimes he feared that she might yield her hand without her heart, and they both be doomed to a life of mutual misery. A morbid fear grew upon him on this point; and

for this reason he left off all reference to marriage; but devoted himself as far as possible to her interest and pleasure. She was lacking in nothing to please him, except in not returning his love.

He found a kind of melancholy pleasure in serving her who was so precious to him. It seemed that she accepted his kindness because it pleased him and it became a habit. So the time went by bringing to neither little else than hard work and the pleasure of success.

In his church work Tom gathered to him the sympathy and love of all the pious and godly members; but those who opposed all progress, the worldly minded and ungodly ones were constantly grumbling, finding fault and stirring up opposition. Many were under the influence of Luckey, who led the opposition to him because he would not preach to them for nothing. They found many pretexts for complaint. To some his sermons were too personal, or they were unentertaining, tiresome or too long, and in their opinion, he was the wrong man for their church. In their complaints they would say: "You can not catch flies with vinegar." In their sinful, worldly lives the sweetest gospel sermons, filled with the story of the cross, the instructions and invitations of Jesus, the exceeding great and precious promises of God, were only as vinegar in their teeth. But there were many others to whom the Word of the Lord was more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold, and sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb.

So while there was much grumbling and complaining on the one side, there was encouragement, sympathy and co-operation on the other.

There was a strong demand on the part of some for a rigid discipline in the church; but Tom insisted that the church had been cold and inactive so long, that a large portion of the membership had been walking more or less disorderly, and were in no condition for discipline. He labored to get the church so filled with the Holy Spirit, and to develop them up to such a degree of spiritual life that there would be no cause for discipline among them. They might then have a "readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled." When the church should be waked up and brought back to obedience to Christ, then they would be prepared to withdraw from all who walked disorderly. He had been pleased from the very first meeting to see signs of repentance and a growing spirituality from the preaching of the gospel and teaching the commands of Christ.

Tom was very happy over the first conversion and addition to the church. He was the son of his old friend, the brother of Mae. It brought great joy to many of the members, and they hoped that the mantle of his father might fall upon him, and that he might make a preacher. Others were added continually, although there were no special evangelistic meetings. As these signs of improvement increased the evidences of opposition to Tom's pastorate also increased.

This opposition was most manifest by those who were intent upon introducing worldliness into the church to make it more popular with the world, and draw the ungodly into its folds. These were offended by the plain gospel sermons, and the simple spiritual services, and they made strenuous efforts to displace the congregational singing by a choir of ungodly singers. They made many annoying, though unsuccessful, efforts to turn the spiritual worship of God in his sanctuary into a means of Sunday entertainments. Many of the members engaged in the dance, and in all other forms of worldliness. They were offended because the pastor would not consent to receive any unless they consented to give up all these things.

After a few months it became evident the church was approaching a crisis. The opposition was growing stronger and much more determined. Luckey and his crowd had gone to work in deep earnest to get rid of the pastor. Every member was seen by them whom they hoped to influence, and every objection was pressed against the pastor that could be thought of, and every influence was employed that was in reach to put him out. They advised him to resign, and threatened to vote him out, to divide the church; but Tom knew that there was a power with him that was far stronger than all that could possibly be against him. He believed that the opposition would be overruled of the Lord for great and permanent good to the church, so he went forward

with faith in God, realizing that he was working for God and with God. It was a source of great comfort and strength to know that the Lord was with him guiding him by his Spirit, and that in Christ he was safe under the keeping power of God. He was happy in the thought that they could do nothing under the leadership of Satan unless it were permitted of God.

When Tom looked at this unspiritual body, many of them living in worldliness and sin, with so little love to God and each other, and so many of them opposing the truth and fighting against the work of the Lord, he was sick at heart. Is this the model church, he would ask himself, that I have loved and of which I have dreamed all these years? Where is the body of regenerated members all living new lives, moved by love to Christ to know and obey His Holy Word, and all living pure Christian lives, bound together by Christian love, and filled and led by the Holy Spirit, at work for souls and the spread of the kingdom of God? As he thought of what they ought to be and compared this with what the church really was, he was filled with sadness, and for a time his efforts were almost entirely paralyzed. But in earnest prayer to God he found help. He thought of the condition of the church at Corinth and of the state of things at Gallatia, and it became evident that the Lord intended that the gospel should be preached to all people, and that believers should be taught to do all things which He has commanded.

There were probably some in the church without being Christians, and none of them had been fully taught to do all things the Lord says do. He determined to take hold upon the church just as he found it, and labor by kind, loving teaching to lead them to know and do all the will of God, and to live by every word of God.

For a time Tom was not sure whether he ought to hold on to the pastorate against the opposition, or give up. He prayed for guidance, and awaited the leadings of the Holy Spirit. The first determined step of the opposition after they completed their canvas of the membership was a motion requesting the pastor to resign. This was an unfortunate step for the opposition, as many of the disaffected members felt that the Lord had sent Tom to them, and they were not prepared to go in direct opposition to the plainly indicated will of God. This left the opposition with a very small minority vote, but it stung them into a rage of passion, and they announced that they would withdraw from the church and form one of their own. To this threat the majority very willingly consented, passing a resolution permitting all who were disaffected to withdraw from the church in peace and brotherly kindness.

Tom was relieved and felt happy in the prospect that the church was so soon to unload its heavy burden of dead weight. Their going out would remove most of the unconverted material, and take out the great mass of worldly

and ungodly influence which had held back the power of the Spirit, and hindered the progress of the more godly workers. But just at this time, Luckey, the leader of the opposition, was sick nigh unto death, and repented of the mischief he was doing. During what he believed to be his last moments he urged his followers to turn from their ungodly and worldly lives and serve the Lord. He told them that he had seen his mistake in pretending to serve God while living for Satan, and working to spread his kingdom. He felt that he had been a vile hypocrite, a whited sepulchre, while pretending to be a Christian he had been doing all he could for Satan.

He deeply repented of the wicked life he had lived, the evils he had done the cause of Christ, and in deep sorrow he urged all his followers to repent of their sins, seek the Lord and live for Him. He prayed earnestly that he might live so as to undo some of the harm he had done in opposing the Lord's work, and in leading so many into worldliness and sin. For a long while he lingered in uncertainty, whether he would live or die, but finally the scales turned and he took a fresh hold upon life. His recovery was slow and it was many months before he was able to attend to business and fill his place in the church.

During this time the Banker, another strong leader of the opposition and worldly party, broke and destroyed the prospect of immediately building the fine new house for the opposition. He had promised to build them a much

finer house than the old one, if they would pull out and organize a new church. This also checked the division, and at this time the power of God was manifested in the church, and a mighty revival took hold upon it, and shook the whole town.

While all the members were largely benefited by this meeting, the younger ones were especially blessed. The pastor preached on the secret of a happy Christian life, and urged the necessity of living in Christ as they did when they first believed in Him. They came to Him then as poor, weak, lost sinners to be saved by Him, through His grace. Also they gave up every sinful thing when they sought peace with God, and were willing to deny themselves, take up their crosses and follow Christ. If they would live happy Christian lives, then they must live trusting Christ, and denying themselves, and following Him. They could not go back to the world, and engage in the dance and other things of the world and live in sin, and yet retain the joys of salvation. When Christians go back to these things they get into darkness and doubt. They must give up either the things of the world and Satan, or the joys, usefulness and happiness of their Christian experience. Self and sin must be denied, or Christ; the pleasures of sin given up, or the joys of salvation be lost. They make their own choice, and it is strange that a child of God could ever hesitate one moment as to the giving up of sin and denying self that he may enjoy the peace of God.

While he pressed these thoughts and urged Christians to believe in Christ, and trust in Him, and His atoning blood, and to give themselves fully to Him, there was much feeling. One clear-headed, strong young man, who had been a leader in worldliness, came to the pastor and gave him his hand as pledge that he would turn back to Christ and His service. He had once had Christian joy and peace, but much of his life had been in darkness because spent in disobedience and sin. He was fully resolved to give up the world and every sinful thing, and give himself wholly to Christ and to His service. He wanted to live in Christ and have the joys of salvation, and helpful to others as he did when he first came to Christ.

Many others followed his example until nearly all the young members, and a great many of the old ones, were around the pastor. Mae came forward among the last and gave her hand, saying: "My rebellion is all gone now; I surrender myself fully to Christ, and would walk in Him as I first received Him. Pray for me that I may be forgiven for all the past and be faithful to Christ in all things."

It was a time of deep spiritual upheaval; the young members, and many old ones, turned fully to Christ, and were ready for instruction and work. The church was now safe, and the cause of Christ moved forward from that good day. They could live in peace, for He made them dwell in safety. Tom felt the purest joy now, for he was sure that he might begin to realize his hope to develop his long cherished

ideal church and lead them to live by the Word of God.

Such members as yet walked disorderly were earnestly labored with, and cut off from membership. The pastor taught them the commands of Christ, and fed the young members on the pure milk of the Word, that they might grow thereby. He labored to develop them in all the graces and gifts of the Spirit, and led them to abound in the knowledge of the Word of God, in the work of the Lord in missions, and prayer and praise. His church became a comfort and joy to him, because the Lord made them to increase and abound in love one towards another more and more.



CHAPTER XII.

Renewal of Friendship.

When the Bank of Allendale broke many suffered loss, but Tom had made no deposits, only lending money to it, and taking mortgage on the academy buildings and grounds. When the break came, he and Mae's mother held papers covering its full value, and they took the property to satisfy their claims. With the buildings they also obtained a large body of land lying on the north and west of the town. Tom examined this land very carefully, and when his friend proposed to sell her part of it, he prevailed upon her not to do it, as he was sure it would be very valuable at no distant day.

The school now was private property, and they reorganized and put it in condition to do better work. Mae was fully prepared to take charge of the highest classes, and she shared the principal's office with Tom, and her brother Henry took her classes. By this means Tom found time to take the rest he needed from the over-work of his pastorate and teaching. He found in his walks over the hill adjoining the school buildings a large spring of superior mineral water, which soon brought back health and vigor. As this and other springs were more elevated than the town he arranged to bring the water to the buildings.

The high ridge on the west of the town he found to contain coal of a high grade. A new railroad was applying for privilege to pass

through this land when it fell into his hands, which he saw would be a great help in working and marketing the coal. Tom had also bought a large body of land lying on the south, which he was sure the growth of the town would make valuable at no distant day.

During these months of work Mae had steadily improved in beauty and loveliness of character. That sad hungry look had left her eyes, and there was no defiance in her face; but a sweet trustfulness shone in her eyes, and there was an air of cultivation and refinement in all she did. She and Tom were much together in the evenings, and she carried on her college studies. She seemed more happy in his company, and was ever thoughtful of his comfort and pleasure. Tom had lost much of his former gladness of nature and cheerfulness of spirit. He seemed to be fast reaching the conclusion that there was nothing before him in life except to toil on in poverty of heart to enrich others both for time and eternity.

Tom went often over to see his stepfather on the farm, and spent his vacations with him. The second summer vacation he found his health failing to such a degree that he was unable to attend to the business. With perfect ease Tom took it in hand and relieved his mind from all burden. During these days they had much pleasant talk of the past and of their hopes for the time to come. He was greatly pleased with Tom's plans and success in life, and especially with his prospects for mining coal and iron. He was satisfied that all these enterprises would pay well at no distant day.

During these summer talks he told Tom of his reason for keeping him ignorant of his interest in the estate. So many young men at that time were being ruined by their expectation to own property that he determined to keep him in ignorance of his property. The expectations of owning wealth removed from them all incentive to personal effort in anything. He wanted to make a full-grown man out of Tom, so that he would be able to make money as well as spend it. It would be hard for them to go to work when they had spent all they inherited, and after they had cultivated such extravagant tastes and habits, it would be so hard to live on the little they could make. He had developed Tom by work and frugal habits into a true and noble manhood, with business knowledge and principles which would make a good living without any inheritance.

He had been compelled to put him behind the plough at first to save his life, and it was such a benefit that he kept him at it. He had stopped him from school and put him back to the plough because his health was failing, and he wanted to prevent him from becoming hindered in his growth. He wanted to preserve his health and develop him into a perfect physical frame.

Tom thanked him for his care of him, and that he had saved him from the terrible failures of many of his early associates. He remembered their foolish pride, and their vain and selfish lives, and was so glad that he had

been put behind the plough, for it had developed his love for study, and made a student of him. Those years of toil and study had been a great blessing, and he had already found need for the experience and habits formed by his early hard work and self-denying toil on the farm, and his Bible had led him to a pure, godly life.

When Tom was of age his step-father wanted to turn over his part of the estate, but he insisted that it all be kept together under his management and use as long as he lived. But now on account of failing health he gave up the management of the entire property while he sought health in travel. Before he left he made his will, giving Tom his interest in the estate, and all of his personal property, except a farm which he left to Natt, his faithful friend and attendant. He turned over to Tom his iron safe, which had been in Tom's family for many years, and in it he found many valuable papers and mementos of his loved ones. His mother's watch, though costly with jewels, was more valued by him than all jewels. Troops of memories came to his mind as he sat by the safe and examined its contents. He lived over those dark and lonely days of the past, and his one faithful friend, old Jim, he would never forget. It gave him pleasure that he was still alive, and was fully cared for and happy. He remembered with delight the face of the pure, noble girl who came to his relief when almost in despair, and had inspired him by her friendship and sympathy with a cour-

age and determination which had led him to the fullness of his present success. She had encouraged him, prayed for him, led him by her faith in God, and by her noble character and pure life to attempt greater things in character and life than he had ever thought possible. Then he had pledged perpetual and undying friendship, and he would give her that friendship if she was never able to accept any more.

He then thought of the sore trials in school, the foolish pride and contempt of many who were now either in their graves from dissipation, or were undergoing the sore trials of poverty. Then he thought of Ben Small, his one friend and fellow-worker for the good of others, and forthwith he closed the door of the old safe and hurried away to find his old friend and Christian brother. To him he rented the entire farm, and he and his wife, Mich Hardy, took charge of the old home as it stood, reserving rooms for Tom and his step-father when they were present.

Mae went with Tom to visit her old friend Mich, and to see again the school grounds of her childhood. She was much delighted with Tom's beautiful gray saddle horse which he had reserved for her special use, while he rode his step-father's equally beautiful gray. Upon these they had many delightful rides not only about the old home in the country, but over the hills around Allendale. For old man Jim, and his faithful wife Catherine, went back with him at the opening of the next term to care for

him and look after the horses. From that time they cared for each other with pure and un-failing love till separated by death. Tom saw that their every want was fully met, and in many ways they looked after his comfort, and lightened the burdens of Mae's mother at the boarding house.

Tom and Mae found that the old school house had been moved, and the very yard was under cultivation. There were but few familiar objects around the place except the old well and the lime sink, for the liveoaks had been cut away and a beautiful crop was growing round its sides. The few years of absence had made many changes. The grand old homes were many of them deserted and were fast going down. The once well kept farms were now generally left to the unskilled cultivation of the negro farmers, while the white families had gone to the towns and cities. Just below Tom's old home there was a church with a school house, and a large and prosperous settlement of white people, who made good neighbors for Ben and his wife.

While riding one day and talking of the many memories of the past, Tom told Mae of the dark days of sore struggle while alone in the world, as he labored under the contempt of almost the entire school, and when he had almost fainted a pure and lovely girl had spoken words of sympathy and encouragement to him, and led him to take heart and determine to succeed. He told her how much like a pure and holy angel that noble girl had seemed to

him ever after that day, and having helped him in the time of his sorest need, led him to determine that he would make himself worthy of her friendship as long as he lived. He felt that she was far above him in his ignorance, poverty and loneliness in the world; and his chief aim was to so develop himself, and by divine grace live so pure a life that he might enjoy her kind Christian sympathy and friendship. He had hoped some time to be worthy of the sympathy, friendship and society of even the angels, and it encouraged him to hope that he might be worthy of hers. He had not hoped that he could ever rise far enough above his poverty and low estate that he could be worthy of her as a companion. But later in life he even dared hope that some day he could be able to overcome his poverty, and develop himself into such true, noble, strong and successful Christian manhood that he might blot out from her memory the poverty and weakness of the past, and so win her respect that he might hope to enjoy the blessings of her pure, sweet companionship.

At this point he noticed that Mae was pale and trembling with emotion, while the tears gathered in her eyes. With deep feeling he said: "Forgive me, my friend! I am truly sorry to wound one who has been so kind and helpful to me." Holding up a small medal from his watch chain, he said: "Mae, I beg your kind forbearance on the basis of our sacred promise of friendship made under those peculiar circumstances. You remember how your

prayers went up for a poor orphan boy's life when it seemed that he was near the end. When I came back to life, that day, I was happy beyond words to express. I seemed to have had a bright view and sweet foretaste of the glory and happiness of heaven; and when I seemed to be sent back to live and labor for Him on earth, and to 'tell Mae,' there was a view of such a lovely and happy home, with such contented and happy inmates that it fills me with joy every time I think of it. I scarcely dared to think of this vision then, it seemed so sacred, and I have never spoken of it before. It may have been the creation of a disordered mind; but I received it as an earnest of the blessings kept in store by our gracious Lord. It has been an assurance to me during all my lonely years, and has made my life much brighter and purer.

This medal came to me at that time, and has been a great joy and comfort to me, assuring me of the friendship and sympathy of one of the truest hearts I ever knew; and at the same time reminding me that she, too, is human, and needs friendship, sympathy and help. I have prayed for her every day since then, and have never suffered a single opportunity to pass unemployed when I saw that I could be of help to her; and unless when I have pressed her to make my life happy at the expense of her own happiness. I still promise to be a true and unchanging friend to her, no matter what the cost may be to me. Her wish and pleasure shall be my pleasure."

Mae gave him a grateful look and said: "You have been the truest friend I have ever had. You have brought me back, by the Lord's help, to a true spiritual Christian life, brighter and happier than I expected it ever to be. Had I only gone on from that time to grow in knowledge and grace, I might truly have been all you believed me to be. But all those years I was drifting down stream and losing what I had gained, while you were improving all the time. You do not realize it; and you can not understand what I am now. You did not know me as I was then; but knew your own bright, angelic, ideal of what your imagination made me, nor do you understand what I am now! If I could only call back the years I have spent since then, and begin life over, how differently I would live! I would not cut myself off from the sympathy and help of my truest friend. Oh, I wish you could understand how much I have changed since then, and how different I am now from what I was, and what I might have been, had I only continued to develop?"

Tom said: "Mae, I know it all; and yet, you have grown far more than you realize. Your trials have been working for you a far more and eternal weight of glory. You are now in position to obtain all the personal development you may wish. Our woes may even become the means of bringing us nearer to God."

Mae said with deep feeling: "I am determined to live closer to God than I have ever

done; and I am so glad that you can be such a true, kind and patient friend to me. I owe far more to your friendship than I shall ever be able to pay back; but I am truly glad to feel that the pledge of our mutual friendship and help is renewed, and I promise never to seem to forget it again. I will be your best and truest friend as long as I live, and never fail you in any time in need; only trust me fully, and be patient with me. My past acts, as well as my present life, are all under the dictates of what seems to me the highest friendship."

Tom's eyes were moist as he said: "Mae, you have been my best earthly friend; and if you can never be any more than a friend, I shall prize your friendship far above the deepest love of any other woman, and shall be glad to live to make your life happy as your friend. Sometimes I fear I shall make myself offensive to you by pressing my selfish suit; but if I find this is true, I promise to give you a long rest by taking an extended trip of foreign travel, and a term of art study. But I shall wait till I feel the trip will be a blessing to us both."

Mae said: "Tom, please do not take anything for granted, as to your presence being an offense to me. Wait till I grow weary of your company, and fail to meet you with gladness. If I ever be offended with you, then leave me; but not until then. But do not take anything for granted; because you fail to understand me. What you think I am, your imagination has largely made me; and what I really

am, I fear, you will find out too late. This is my one great dread; I am sure you do not understand me as I am. I see myself so differently from what you seem to see me. I felt it in those young days; and yet I now see that it is only what I might have become; but am not, and fear I shall never be able to realize. Why is it that you can take your church, business and everything in life, just as you find it, and labor to make it what it ought to be; and yet make me the one exception? You do not see me as I am; but seem to see far more than I really am. It is not my real self you love so much; but your ideal of me. It is not my real self but another woman altogether."

Tom tried to convince Mae that he did understand her as she really was, and that he was able to see more of her excellent qualities than she could realize; but she was sure that his poetic imagination invested her with qualities altogether foreign to her; and was pained by the belief that it was her imaginary, and not her real self, that he loved.

These rides and talks were repeated many times until the vacation was drawing to a close. Every place of interest was visited, and Mae's old home was seen; but it had changed so much that it was but a faint ghost of its former beauty, so they did not stay long to examine it. As they rode away from it Mae said: "I am as much changed for the worse as that once lovely home is changed. You can detect the changes in it, and yet fail to see any in me."

"Not so," said Tom. "Your changes are all plain to me; but they are not as the home; and if they really were, I would be glad to take you as you are, and live and labor to make you what you want to be.' But Mae objected to that, and asked him to be patient with her.



CHAPTER XIII.

Fiery Trials.

After the vacation was over Mae and Tom continued to take their horseback rides, and found much benefit, as well as pleasure, from them. They seemed to be brought to a better understanding of each other by them. She was glad to be with him, and he was never happier than when with her.

Soon after their return from the country, Mae told him that she was troubled because he had taken the oversight of his stepfather's business. She was fearful that he would become too much occupied with the things of the world, and neglect his pastoral work. He told her that the business was put upon him by Providence and he would try to not allow it, nor anything else, to hinder him in his one work. But it really seemed to do him good, by giving him a rest from his one special line of thought.

He wanted to tell her about his share in the estate, and the true condition of his finances, but he thought it might appear that he was appealing to her from a wrong motive. He wondered if they should ever be able to understand each other. He tried to understand her as she was, and thought that he did understand her, and was willing to take her as she was; but she would not consent. So he must wait in patience, and hope on to the end.

His church was rapidly growing, and as the months passed by it grew more evident that

he would soon have to give up all other work and devote himself entirely to it. He found great pleasure in its rapid progress; the deep spirituality of many of its members, and in their deep Christian love and pure, sweet Christian fellowship. They were ready to follow him in any and every good work.

As the months of the term went by his heart grew faint and almost sick over the long delay of waiting. At times he would be filled with sweetest hope, and then soon be plunged into despair; and at such times it would seem that he must lose his mind. The quick eyes of Mae were not slow to note the change in her friend, nor to discern the cause. She tried to make up for what she had been unable to give. She found pleasure in his company, and took deep interest in all that pleased him; yet he could see nothing, nor feel any influence brought to bear upon him. So she became more fully persuaded that it was not her real, but ideal self he loved.

Tom had painted her likeness as she seemed to him on that May morning, and put his whole soul into the work. The face was beautiful enough to have been the face of an angel; while the youth at her side was neither handsome nor attractive, except the glow of intelligence in his face. He was evidently so absorbed by the beauty of that lovely face that he was unconscious of his own existence. When Mae saw this picture her eyes filled with tears, and she turned away and hurriedly left the room. From this fact Tom decided that the

very circumstance itself was distasteful to her, and he resolved to never refer to it again, unless she did. From this time he believed that his case was hopeless; and Mae was fully satisfied that he loved his own ideal, and not her real self. He put this picture away, out of sight, and painted another of Mae as he saw her in the times of purest joy and happiest moments. He gave much time to this work, and sought to catch the expressions of her face when free from any trouble. The face was more mature, and while the bloom of youthful beauty was not quite so fresh, yet there was a more mature beauty than upon the other. By her side Tom was standing, looking down into her lovely face with eyes which searched in vain for what they wished. His fine, scholarly, handsome face told plainly that all else in life was failure because that lovely face gave no response to the true feelings he brought. He carried a sketch of these pictures in his pocket, developed to a good degree of excellence.

During this term Tom grew pale and thin, and went through his work with less life than usual. He seemed to have lost all hope, and ambition, except in his pastoral work. His preaching was more spiritual, and had never been more successful; but his people were distressed to see him losing his strong good health. They suggested rest, and his physician advised freedom from work, and a visit to the old world, where new scenes would relieve his mind from overwork.

But Mae urged that he would not go then; but wait till summer. She walked and rode with him and labored to divert his mind, and win his heart to her. They wandered over the hills, prospected for coal and iron, studied geology in the bed of the new railroad; and every day they either rode or walked together. But she felt sure his trouble was of the mind and not so much of the body.

As they returned from one of these walks they were talking about the answer of prayer, and Tom referred to the answer of her prayer for him, when he was so near death, and told her to pray constantly for him, as he felt sometimes as though he was waiting in the time of adversity. He had prayed and felt sure of the answer to his prayers; yet he feared his faith was failing. It seemed at times as though he was losing his hold on life. She told him with tears that she did pray for him constantly, and she felt sure her prayers would be answered; and that was why she did not wish him to leave then.

They were standing upon an elevated plain, near the Academy, and Tom pointed out to her the site for the new college building, the business streets for the new town, and residence streets, and the streets for the homes of the miners, when the coal mines were opened. This would one day be the busiest part of the town. Other roads were coming, and the town would build up rapidly; and he had purchased all the land reaching back to the old town. There would soon be many mills

and other enterprises started up in the eastern part of the new town on the banks of the river, where the falls gave so much free water-power.

While they talked of these new enterprises, Mae asked why not build the college on the hill, where they stood, as it was the prettiest place in the new town. Tom told her there was a better place for it on the old site, and the natural grove would be made into a delightful campus, and this hill he had bought for the home of the president. He then turned to her and said: "Please let me say that I love you dearer than my own life. Can you not encourage me to hope that some day you can return my love, and come and live with me here, and help me build here my ideal home?"

She turned her face quickly away from him, but not before he had seen, as he believed, a dark cloud of displeasure pass over it. When she turned again towards him her face was pale, and she was trembling as she said: "It is a pretty place." But Tom could stand no more; he was deadly pale, and the world seemed suddenly to vanish from his sight; and he leaned heavily against a large sloping rock, and his head sank down, and he seemed to be dead.

Mae was greatly frightened and felt for his pulse, but in her excitement could find no evidence of life. In that terrible moment all her past life came before her, and revealed to her that Tom was more to her than all the world

combined. How dark her life would be without him! and how blank and lonely! If he was dead, she hoped her merciful Father would let her go too. The thought that she had killed him took possession of her mind, with terrible force, and filled her with the deepest anguish.

She stooped to pick up his sketch book, where it had fallen from his hand, and lay open at the picture of herself. She saw her own face, perfectly true to nature, with a beauty and loveliness all her own, while Tom's wrapt and delighted gaze upon it left no doubt in her mind that he loved her as she really was, and not the poetic conception of what she might have been. It took but a glance to tell her this, and her heart fainted within her as she saw him lying there as in death.

Looking around for help she saw Doctor Hall passing and signaled him to come. It seemed an age before he could reach them, and as he felt his pulse and heart, she asked tremulously: "Doctor, is he dead?" For a time he seemed not to hear her oft-repeated question; but finally answered: "He is not dead. He has been under too much mental strain of late. He should have followed my advice, and gone away for a long rest and change of scene; and he would have avoided this miserable breakdown."

Again she asked: "Will he die?" And as the doctor said he hoped not, a sort of quiver passed over Tom's body and his eyes opened

and closed again as he said softly: "‘Not my will, but Thine be done.’" Again he seemed to be gone, and Mae asked with streaming eyes: "Doctor, will he die?" He shook his head and in tones of sadness answered: "I think he will live, but it seems to me that death would be preferable to him and better for you. There are some things in life too heavy for mortals to carry long, and death is a Christian’s best friend, when he reaches the limit of endurance."

Mae answered: "Why can not men be sensible? I know that Alice cares only for you, and is sorely troubled by your failure to understand her. Why will you sacrifice such deep love as hers, and make two lives unhappy?"

At this moment Tom opened his eyes and said faintly: "I shall not die, but live to glorify thee." Mae could not restrain her tears as she looked into his weak, sad eyes, and upon his pale face, and asked if he was in any pain. He said he felt no pain, was only faint, and hoped soon to be all right. After taking some medicine from the Doctor, by his help he entered the carriage and was driven to his boarding house. He told Mae that he was sorry to leave her in their walk, and asked that she accompany them; but she declined, as they were near home.

When alone Mae opened Tom’s sketch book and turned to his picture of her on that May morning, and read: "My ideal. My beautiful young love’s dream. True to nature, and

what nature would have been under favorable surroundings." Further on she came to another. "My Ideal Realized." This she studied closely, and saw her real self, and was filled with joy as she realized that he understood her as she was, and it made no difference if he did see more in the face than any one else. That, she thought, is truly the gift of the artist. Why had she not understood this before?

Then there was "My Ideal Home, to be built when Mae consents to live in it with me. I will test the matter once more, know the worst, and then submit to the will of God." Then under a recent date was written: "My Last Will. In case of death, I leave all I possess to Mae Allen." This was signed, and duly witnessed.

As she read these over she said: "Dear man! how have I misunderstood you? Thank the Lord for such true, strong and unchanging love. How strange that he should love me with such undying devotion. I fully live only in his presence; and he has developed me into what I am from a mere shadow. How nearly I have come to losing him! He will probably never mention the subject to me again! How shall I ever be able to make him understand that I am not dead to him?" As these thoughts ran through her mind the fear began to rise up that he would now leave for a long visit to the Old World, and probably droop and die among strangers. What could she do to prevent it? was the one question that she asked over and over.

She threw herself down upon the rock, and poured out her soul in prayer to God. She prayed for forgiveness, for wisdom, and that the great fear of her heart might be turned aside. At first it seemed as though the heavens were shut up, and the ear of God turned aside, and she left alone in this dark world. It seemed that she had almost murdered her best friend, and had driven him from her, and he would naturally feel that it would be better for him away from her than with her. Her faith seemed so weak that she could not even pray and be heard. Yet she was sure she had acted as she ought to have done as his best friend. If she had accepted him while believing that he loved an ideal, and did not even know what she was, it would have caused great unhappiness to both, when he discovered his sad mistake.

She agonized in prayer while one wave of anguish after another rolled over her soul; and could only plead for mercy through Christ to submit to the will of God. She prayed thus until she became perfectly calm, and a sweet peace filled her soul, and while she could not tell how her troubles would end, yet she felt sure the Lord would sustain her under all that must be borne.

When she rose up in the twilight to go home, she was glad to see the doctor coming for her. As he assisted her in entering the carriage, he saw deep sadness in her face, and said: "Mae, I am sorry for your troubles. Our pastor is better, but his is a desperate

case. He evidently feels that all hope is ended for him, and his ideal home a perpetual failure. He did not refer to the matter, nor would I to you, only I want to know how to advise him. If there is no hope left, then he must drown his troubles in long absence, among new scenes. He must seek change at once; and be kept from any excitement of feeling. I ask for no confidences, but what must I do?"

Mae answered with deep feeling: "Please do not send him away! If he should die, I would feel that I had killed him. If he goes away with his present misunderstanding I shall not be able to endure the separation; but if he is in danger, I will submit." The doctor explained that Tom must find relief in change of place, and the pen could explain mistakes as well as the voice, and advised prudence in all that might be done.

The next day Tom was feeling so much improved that he preached for his people. His text was: "The will of the Lord be done." Those who heard him thought he referred to his recent affliction, and that even his own life was at the disposal of his Lord. It seemed to some as though he preached his own funeral, yet he was not only resigned to the Lord's will, but happy in it.

Mae remembered the words of the doctor, that it would be far better for him to die than live the life of disappointment that lay before him; and felt that she would have little to brighten her own life if he were to die. She

wondered that Tom had misunderstood her true feelings towards him. As preacher he seemed to know every phase of human nature, and as an artist he knew how to catch and express every feeling of the soul; yet as a lover he seemed to know nothing at all of woman's nature. Why could he not see that her heart returned love for love, and how would she ever be able to cause him to understand her true feelings? He interpreted her every embarrassed or distressed expression to imply offense at his suit. She would gladly have told him all her mind, but he gave her no opportunity. He regarded the matter as permanently settled.

In bitter anguish Tom had called upon the Lord for grace and strength to submit to His will, and after spending several hours in prayer early Sunday morning, he remembered that Jesus says: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." He prayed in Jesus' name that he might have peace in Christ; and that his heart might not be troubled nor afraid. As he prayed a deep sweet peace came over him, and he found that he could let his heart not be troubled nor afraid, only by believing in God, and also by believing in Christ. He did believe in Christ; and he believed that all

He says is true. He believed there were many mansions in his Father's house, and Christ had gone to prepare him a place there, and would come back and receive him there with Himself. This would henceforth be his ideal home, and it little mattered where he dwelt while he labored and waited here till his Lord should come and receive him to himself in his Father's home.

He felt that the Lord did indeed come unto him, and did not leave him comfortless; but manifested Himself to him. Tom prayed very earnestly that he might know and gladly do the Lord's will. He prayed that Mae might not be influenced by his weakness to yield her hand without her heart; and that he might be able to be too true a friend to her to ever press her again against her will to marry him. He was filled with unspeakable peace, and was willing to suffer the will of God, as well as do it.

He spent much of the Sunday afternoon in his room alone with God; and decided that he had been trying to live too much by bread alone, and not enough by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. It seemed to him that he had succeeded in all of his efforts but one, and probably he had not remembered fully enough that the Lord had given him wealth, and the ability to succeed in all he undertook. He determined to take heed lest he should forget that without Christ he could do nothing. He had set his heart, perhaps, too much on this life, and had thought

too much about an earthly home. It had become his chief earthly aim to build his ideal home.

Now he freely gave it all up, as he felt in submission to the will of God, and he would live for God, and His kingdom, and for his heavenly home. In this state of feeling he went to sleep; and dreamed that Mae came to him, and said: "Try again, I know you can succeed. Father says we often fail because we give up too soon. Study your piece till you know it thoroughly." Then he thought her eyes were running over with tears, and her face beaming with joy as she said: "I have prayed for you, and I am sure you will get well." For some time he seemed to live over the past, and felt himself moved by the one purpose, to make himself worthy of her friendship. So when he finally awoke from his troubled sleep, he felt the purpose of his early life had returned with many fold more fervor than ever before.

He would make himself more worthy of her friendship than he had ever been before. It should be a friendship based upon the purest love. He would live and manifest his love in serving and pleasing her, and he would never mention his love again, but would live it all the time for her happiness.

CHAPTER XIV.

Perfected Through Suffering.

The following day Tom secured the services of Richard Hall, who had preached for him the night before, to supply his church during his absence. He left the school under Mae's control, telling her that he must seek rest in change of scene and relief from toil, or else suffer a complete breakdown in health. She held up the medal on his watch chain, and said: "I am fearful that you are not strong enough to take the travel you propose alone, and if anything serious should come of your trip, I should feel that I am responsible for it. I know I am your true friend, if I do seem to bring trouble to you."

Tom looked at her in a hopeless manner and said: "Mae, I feel like I have already died, and am now beginning life over again. But it is no fault of yours, and you are in no way to blame. I must have been trying to go contrary to the purpose of God, and have misinterpreted His will. I am resigned, I trust, to His will, and can say 'The will of the Lord be done.' I submit at last."

With deep feeling while her eyes grew moist, as she held up the medal, Mae said: "I feel now that I am alone in the world, and I need your sympathy and help. I told you once that I felt that I should need your sympathy and help far more than you would need mine. Please do not forget our pledge. I will never fail to remember it, and prove my friendship in every possible way I can."

Tom said: "I do feel for you, my friend! My heart has bled for you all the time! I know that your friendship must have been sorely taxed, and for that reason I have kept silent, and will likely never burden your friendship in that manner any more. I have been so selfish, that I feel you could not but doubt the purity of my friendship, which has sought its own, and not your pleasure. It shall be my happiness to make you happy. I assure you now that you shall find in me, to the fullest extent of my ability, all the sympathy and help I can render. If I may never be more than a friend, I assure you that you shall never have cause to complain of my friendship. I hold myself ready to answer every demand that you may make, and assure you that I shall count it my highest pleasure to be permitted to contribute to your help to bear your burdens, or trials, or to make your life brighter and better. My own disappointment and failure in life shall be sweet, when I remember that by the loss I sustain, your life has at least been less dark and burdened. I promise you again that I shall never lose sight of your well being and happiness. I will be your truest friend forever."

At that time Tom noticed that Mae's face was very pale and she seemed very much agitated, and said: "Please excuse me, my friend, I would not pain you for anything, and yet to my great sorrow I seem to be a source of continued trouble to you!"

"Please do not feel that way," said Mae; "I

am troubled only about your health, and fear that you may have another attack. I appreciate far more than you realize your kindly feelings for me; and am grieved beyond measure over your sufferings."

They parted at the school room, and as she gave him her hand and raised her eyes to his, they were swimming in tears, and she asked that he would write to her every day, for she would be troubled about him.

He carried a heavy heart with him all the way, till he reached the end of his trip. The one question in his mind was, did Mae really have any love for him? What did she mean by saying she cared more for his feelings for her than he knew? Why was she so anxious about him, and what did that look mean from her pure, honest eyes, if she had no love for him? Such questions as these would force themselves upon his mind all the way.

Each day he wrote to her, giving an account of what he saw, and how he fared, stating cheerfully that his health was improving. He was anxious lest his statements about himself should become tiresome and distasteful to her; but at the end of his trip he found the answer to each letter as kindly and warmly written as his own. He felt like a new man, and wrote to Mae that her kind letters had helped him much; and he thought he might hope for an early return as soon as he could engage an expert to test the coal. The samples had proved to be of high grade, and he expected a valuable yield from the mine. He would arrange to begin work on it immediately.

A little later he wrote her that he had times of depression, when all was dark, and there seemed none on earth to care for him, and heaven itself seemed a long way off. There seemed no eye to pity, no hand to save, and the very ear of God appeared dull of hearing, and at such times he walked in darkness and had no light. He knew it was some mental depression, and his physician thought that rest and proper treatment would soon relieve all trouble. For a while he grew worse daily, and was unable to throw off the impression that his life was a failure and he had lived in vain. His mind was so much involved that it seemed to him his loss of Mae was the loss of all. He had lived under the full assurance that the Lord had given Mae to him as his companion, and his failure to win her love and hand so affected his mind as to cause him to think that the Lord had cast him off, because of some sin or unfaithfulness.

His physician was an earnest Christian, and by his warm sympathy won from Tom his life story and his recent affliction; and prevailed upon him to preach for his church the same sermon from the Scripture, "The will of the Lord be done." In the sermon he showed that the will of the Lord is right, and best, and ought to be done, and all Christians ought not only submit to it, but willingly and gladly yield themselves up to the will of God, and enter into it heartily and joyfully. When the will of God crosses the plans and purposes of His people they ought to obtain such grace

and leading of the Holy Spirit that they may yield themselves cheerfully to His will and find their highest joy and greatest happiness in knowing and doing it. Sometimes there are trials of faith, as Abraham was tried when he believed God and became the father of the faithful; then there are tests of faith by fiery trials as were the early Christians, who like Job, could say: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust Him." There are purifying fires of afflictions, which consume the dross, and leave the life approved of God in Christ. What He does we poor short-sighted mortals often know not; but let us not rebel, nor resist His will, and in due time we shall know that He does all things well.

When the services were over the physician met him with a glad light in his eyes, and gave him a cordial grasp of the hand, saying: "My patient is safe now; for no Christian believing and realizing the truths of that sermon, can ever be crushed by any heart trouble. He trusts in the Lord, and loves Him too well to rebel against Him. Accept the will of God, and obtain grace from Him to be happy in doing and suffering His will. Trust in Him my brother, and build up your over-taxed physical powers and you will soon be your self again."

The church invited him to preach again the next Sunday, which he readily consented to do, and was surprised when they extended an earnest call to him to become their pastor. When he prayed over the matter he felt sure

that the Lord directed otherwise. His work was not there, but was far south, where his people loved him as their pastor, and were prayerfully awaiting his return. He felt sure that the Lord wanted him to develop them and lead them to a more faithful obedience to Christ, and cause them to become a blessing to all the surrounding country.

Only once he faltered when he thought of the life he must begin again and live over. A life void of the hope of ever realizing his ideal home. He had studied out his model, and had planned his ideal till it well-nigh seemed a living reality. He intended to reproduce Mae's childhood home, enlarged and perfected, and they would not leave a single part of the home where the Lord was not envited to dwell with them there. But all this was now to be a thing of the past to him. His ideal home would never be built; because Mae was not able to consent to dwell in it with him as his ideal companion. He was too much of an idealist to meet her approval, and he had lost her, it seemed, forever. But he looked to heaven for his ideal home, and he would work out his ideal, as far as possible, in the lives and homes of his people.

He was sorry to decline the loving call to this church, but felt that the will of the Lord demanded it. Yet they constrained him to preach for them while he remained in the city. There were soon evidences of a gracious revival, and many were happily converted, and the church was lifted up to a higher plain

of Christian obedience, and Tom found the spiritual work was greatly beneficial to his health.

The daily letters had continued to pass between him and Mae; and his health was fully restored, and he had obtained his full consent, if truly the Lord's will, to live without her as his companion. He also heard from the specialist that the coal was plentiful and high grade, and he engaged him to get it out.

When the meetings were ended, he wrote to Mae the results, but received no answer for many days. He feared that she had wearied of his letters, yet he would keep his promise, and wrote each day. Finally, when an answer did come, it was written in a weak, trembling hand, indicating that she was ill. She expressed herself as much rejoiced at the results of his meetings, and hoped that he would now realize that the Lord was yet with him, and she was glad that he had such confidence in her; that he would continue to write though no answer came. She hoped he would soon finish his business and return to his friends. She was so thankful that the Lord had not removed him from their church, and sent him to the city. The whole church was full of gratitude and were running over with gladness and praise to the Lord.

She had been sick, nigh unto death, the doctor said; but all danger was now passed, and she was able to write as she sat in her chair. Only say that he would soon be home, and she would improve more rapidly. Come as

early as possible, for she needed him. He telegraphed that he would leave immediately for home; but was unexpectedly detained on his way by the death of his stepfather, and informed her that she might write him on the way. He asked that she would be patient with him, and treat him in the same old kind and friendly manner. He had lived in uncertainty, and had hoped against hope, until he had thought it better to end his suspense. She had earnestly requested that he would not take anything for granted, and he had sought faithfully to know her true feelings, and now had yielded fully to the inevitable. He would find his greatest happiness in contributing to her happiness, and he honored and loved her the more from the fact that she would not yield her hand without the heart.

His early dream had been to make himself worthy of her friendship, and in some way to enjoy her help through life. He would now be happy to perfect his early dream, and he would offer her as pure and unselfish a friendship as his nature could yield. She should never have reason to be offended with him again if in his power to prevent it. He attached no blame to her, for he was sure that she had acted in the fear of the Lord as her own heart and better judgment had dictated.

When he sent this letter he was much in prayer; but his mind was at rest, and he experienced perfect peace in Christ. He felt that the will of the Lord is always best; and on his knees he prayed for grace to enable him to

always say, "Not my will, but Thine be done." While he prayed a sweet peace came into his heart, and a small still voice seemed to answer that the Lord was with him and would help and strengthen him. All dread was gone, and he looked forward to the future with peace and joy in Christ, and felt willing to give himself wholly to the Lord and His work.

He was with his stepfather the last days of his illness, and was a great comfort to him. He found him as he drew near his heavenly home, leaning wholly upon Christ. He said he appreciated more than ever before the fact that he was saved by grace through faith in Christ. He was forgetting all the works of righteousness he had ever done, and was looking to Christ alone, and him crucified as his only hope of salvation. He was happy believing in Christ and in his holy words. The Father's house, the many mansions, the place prepared, and the Lord's coming back again for him to receive him to himself, were all perfectly real to him through belief in Christ and of His words.

Just before his departure, he told Tom that he had been a true son to him, and that he was very happy in his success in life, and in the service of Christ. He urged that he would not attempt to live too much by bread alone, but every word of God. As he succeeded in business, and accumulated more and more wealth, beware lest he at all forget that the Lord gave him wealth and also the power to make it; and be sure to use it for the glory of God.

He also told him not to forget the Old Preacher's daughter and family. Build him a good comfortable home and take Mae and mother and younger children to live with him. Be as a father to all of Preacher Allen's children, and save his wife from all the further burdens of life.

When Tom told him of Mae's feeling toward him, and that he had about despaired of winning her in marriage, he simply said: "No; she has loved you nearly all your life, and has lived for you, and will live for you to the end. You fail to understand her. She is your's wholly, and all you need to do is to take her to yourself and make her life happy."

Before he died he had Tom write her plainly that he wanted her to tell him in her next letter if she did return his love, and if she would consent to marry him. He had him ask for a full and true understanding of her feelings toward him, and promise to cheerfully and lovingly abide by her wishes in the matter.

Mae's answer to both his letters came after his stepfather's death, and he took the letter before the Lord in earnest believing prayer, and seemed to hear the voice of God answering, that the Lord was with him and would strengthen and help him. All anxiety was gone, and he opened the letter with gladness, believing that it would settle the matter according to the will of God, and end his long suspense.

Mae stated that she was much improved in health, and overjoyed at his early return. She was fearful that she had interrupted his plans.

but was so lonely without him. She was glad he had written so plainly and had asked her to do the same thing, for she had found that when she felt most she was able to say the least. When they parted last at the school room door, her heart was near breaking from grief, but she was not able to say a single word that she wanted to say; nor could she say what she wanted on the day he had that fearful attack. There had been many a time when she wanted to say that she had repented of her rebellious life, and would be willing to live any where and under any trials, if necessary, to serve the Lord, and work with Tom. She had never in all her life had any love for any one else, and that lovely May morning was as precious to her as to him, and he might speak of it all he pleased. Some day she would tell him all, and he would understand her better. She was sorry to have caused him to suffer so much, and he need not suffer any more; for her heart was all his and had been all the time. Her only difficulty was that she had believed that he did not really love her, but his own ideal of her. She had been made extremely unhappy by this belief, and it was the cause of all his and her unhappiness, but all of her doubts were gone, and she was happy beyond all power of expression.

Tom was so happy that he sat and wept, then he kneeled down and held the letter up toward heaven and thanked the Lord for the message it brought, and the assurance of Mae's sweet love. He prayed the blessing of the

Lord upon their union, that they might glorify Him in their lives, and that no leanness of soul might come from this gift of his desire. Deep, heartfelt praise went up to God for this great mercy. He had left it all to the will of God, and now he praised Him for His gift. Life was no longer empty and dark, the desire of his life was about to be realized and he was thankful and happy.

He had inherited large property at his stepfather's death, and many times more by his mother's will, but all of it had seemed as nothing while Mae's love was denied him. Now he was thankful that he could make Mae's life more comfortable, and though impatient to be at home, he waited to confer with a contractor and arrange for the building of his home.

When he reached Allendale, Mae and her brother were waiting for him with Uncle Jim and the greys. Their greetings were very warm, and when alone in the home, Tom told her how happy her letter had made him, and how he loved her as his own soul, and asked if she loved him enough to become his wife. She gave him her hand, and lifting the sweetest face and loveliest eyes up towards his, said: "I am yours; I loved you all the time, but was sure that you did not love me when you first returned. I told you then that you loved an artist's dream, instead of myself. My greatest sorrow was that I felt that you loved what I might and ought to have been. I was sure you would awake to the reality some day, and instead of feeling love, you would despise me.

I felt bound for your sake, as well as my own, to discourage your advances. But I saw the model of your last picture and from it I learned my mistake. You knew me better than I did myself, and had been developing me into what you wanted me to be."

Tom put a rare ring upon her finger, and they were both exceedingly happy. He told her mother of their promise, and asked her consent and blessing. She gave it with a happy mother's kiss, and an earnest, "God bless you, my children, and your father's blessing upon you too; for he gave it while he lived. He prayed for this, and that the Lord's blessings might be upon you. I trust what you have suffered may be the means of brightening your lives and save you from other mistakes."

They passed a happy evening in the Allen home, as all the brothers and sisters knew and approved of their promises. Tom wanted her to set an early day for the marriage, and she promised to be ready as soon as the home was built on the hill. She fully approved of his plan, and it was begun in a short time. He felt as he looked into her beautiful and happy face, that he realized his high ideal of womanly beauty and excellence. She was lovely beyond description, and the highest power of the brush had failed to bring out half the loveliness of her face, which was radiant with perfect peace and happiness, and was more lovely than he had before realized. They were contented and happy, and grateful; prayers and thanksgiving went up from their hearts to God, the giver of all good.

CHAPTER XV.

The Story of Suffering.

Tom saw that Mae had been over burdened and her recent sickness had been the result of too much work and mental anxiety, and he insisted that she take a vacation. She put her hand upon his arm, and declared that she would spend her vacation with him, and help him in his work. There was no better health resort than their own mountains, and their own health-giving waters could not be excelled, and she would find health where he had once found it. She only needed rest and time to build her up, as the cause of her disease had been fully removed.

He eldest brother, Jonathan, had returned from college fully prepared to teach and take the entire management of the school, and he took charge of the work with their oversight. Together they rode over the hills, and wandered through the groves, and drank at the health-giving springs, and watched the progress of the new road, and saw with pleasure the opening of the coal mine, and the accumulations of its rich treasures. It was a happy day for them both when the dirt was broken on the hill for their new home.

The builder realized that he had no ordinary work in hand, but was expected to embody in material the dream of the artist, and build a house for an ideal home. The object sought in the building was comfort and beauty, and not a great display. No difference where they

went, it was always convenient to return by the new home.

The first Sunday after Tom's return his people held a thanksgiving service because of his restoration to health and his return to them. They could not pay so large a salary as the other church, and they felt that it was a matter of principle and not money which brought him back to them. They were filled with gratitude to God and love to him because of his devotion to them. He preached from the text: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me? I will take the cup of Salvation and call upon the name of the Lord." He felt truly that the sorrows of death had compassed him, and the pains of hell had got hold upon him, and he had found trouble and sorrow. None but God could tell how low he had been brought, when he felt that the sun was turned into darkness above him, the foundations of the earth did shake and were broken up, and it seemed that he had fallen to rise no more. Thick darkness covered his mind, and it seemed that he was cut off from all hope in life, and the Lord's mercy was clean gone, and His promises failed forever more. But he called upon God in his trouble, and He heard and delivered him from death, his eyes from tears and his feet from falling. Therefore would he call upon Him as long as he lived.

When they had recounted the many benefits of God to them, they all clasped hands in evidence of their pledge of mutual love and fel-

lowship in Christ, and the pastor poured his heart in gratitude and praise to God for all His benefits to them. It was a day of tender and happy thanksgiving by all the church; but to none more than to the pastor and Mae. They had passed through great darkness and sore troubles, and they accepted their deliverance, and gave thanks to the Lord.

The one great object of interest now to Tom and Mae was the building of their home. Here they delighted to linger and direct the various improvements which were in progress. As the season advanced the flower garden and grounds were put in order, one part of the grounds was to be a reproduction of the beautiful grounds at Mae's old home. Here the dear mother would delight to linger and live over the happy days of the past, and bring some of fresh joy to comfort her declining years, and it would be a joy to them to live over something like the same life, looking upon the same beauties of nature. They procured choice plants from the grounds of the old home, and reproduced the flowers, fruits and shade of the home so dear to Mae's heart. Their home was to be her old home enlarged and perfected; so that she should realize all, and more than all she had lost in the home itself.

The large rock upon which Mae had poured out her heart in prayer the day she came so near losing Tom, was in the midst of the grounds, and was to be ornamented and made into a lovely summer house. Here they had

rustic seats prepared, and it was their place of rest while on the hill.

As they talked here one day Mae handed him his sketch book, and told him she picked it up from the rock that day when she thought she had lost him. It had revealed the truth to her and enabled her to realize her great happiness. From it she learned that her artist lover had not only seen more in her girl self than was really there, but saw her and loved her real mature self. It had enabled her to see and realize what she had been unable to understand.

Tom urged that she would tell him the promised story of her life-struggle, and why she had disliked so much to have him refer to that lovely May morning?

She told him he could speak of that lovely May morning when ever he pleased, for that day was as dear to her as it was to him. She had also felt the same kindling of deep feeling, though she did not understand all it meant; but at that time she fully determined to wait until he was through school, and aid him in his glorious work. Just after this she learned that their lovely home might have to go for debt, it had already lost many of its comforts. She saw the terrible strain upon her father, and that he and her mother had lost nearly all the pleasures of life, and were leaning heavily upon the Lord for support under their crushing burdens. She had hoped to go through college, but had been compelled to give it up. These were the things which

had embittered her life, and caused her to feel so unkindly towards the members of her father's church. It seemed to her that they had robbed them of bread, their home, and of their very lives also. They seemed devoid of the love of Christ, as well as common honesty; in that they saw their pastor laboring for them, in deep need of the necessities of life, and yet closed their hearts against him. He sought their highest good, and they were not willing to supply his temporal needs. Her life was made dark, and great bitterness filled her soul against them for their covetousness and wrong against her father.

She felt then that something was terribly wrong with such churches, and decided that she could never consent to depend upon such people for a support. She felt now that this might have been rebellion against the Lord; but at that time she thought it was only a just resentment against their injustice. How little and mean they appeared to her then. They were all doing well in business and many were living in wealth, while there was scarcely bread on their pastor's table. They were heaping up the comforts of life around them, while even his home was being destroyed by their failure to pay him his just wages. Yet they claimed to be the people of God, who gave His Son, and the servants of Christ, who gave Himself for them, while they refused to give of their means to support the minister of Christ who labored for them in spiritual things. She felt unwilling to labor for such people, and decided

that she could not share such a life, even with Tom. She, therefore, determined to crush out whatever of love might be springing up in her heart for him.

The banker's son had for some time showed a decided preference for her society, and although she had never especially liked him, she decided that she would accept him, and thereby save her parents from their terrible struggle with poverty. She compared the two men together on that June evening and found that her heart went out to the other, yet she had determined not to listen to her heart. She had listened to his worldly talk until her mind was perverted, and for the time she well nigh made shipwreck of faith.

All this time things grew worse at home, until the crash came. Only a few days before it did come, her ungodly lover carried her to ride, and they stopped at this place, and he told her that here her house should be. Then he spoke of the grand dances they would have, and of the pleasures they would enjoy from their stores of wine and hoards of gold. But she must promise him that she would give up her father and mother entirely, and leave her church and go with him to his, where they were broad and liberal enough to enjoy all things, and were rich enough to be thoroughly respectable.

When she hesitated, he told her she must submit. He was making all the sacrifice for her, in taking her out of poverty back to wealth, and surely she could do that much

for him. But to his utter surprise, she told him that she could not and would not give up her parents and her obedience to Christ for any amount of wealth. He was exceedingly angry and hissed something like curses through his teeth; and she stepped out of the carriage, and he drove away and left her standing near this rock. She sat down upon it and wept, and tried to pray and repent of all the wrong she had done and felt. She saw some light, but it was very dim.

She looked into Tom's face with moist eyes as she said he could now understand the expression on her face when he told her he had bought this place for her home. She felt then that she could never separate from it those bitter associations. Then turning toward their lovely home that was being built, she sang in a sweet glad voice:

"Out of my stony griefs
Bethel I'll raise."

"Yes," said Tom, "we will call it our 'Bethel Home.'"

After a few moments silence, Mae said: "I knew that you wanted an approval of the place from me more as an encouragement of hope than to settle the matter of the home, and I wanted to approve of it, but your hasty glance and conclusion disarmed me of power to say anything."

"Ah, Mae! How I suffered from that hasty conclusion! and how much unhappiness it caused you!"

"Yes," said she, "but it is past now, and it was the means of bringing about a perfect understanding, and we are the happier now because of it."

"How was it that you could not bear any reference to that lovely May morning?" Tom asked, after another thoughtful silence.

She said she would continue her story, and he would understand. When the crash came and the old home had to go, her cup of grief was full. Her false lover came over to bid in the place; but Tom's stepfather ran it up so high that it paid all the debts and left some money. They disposed of much of their furniture and stock, and this gave them means with which to move and start a small rented farm. Her father struggled bravely against despondency, but his over-taxed strength gave way, and he was prostrated by a nervous breakdown. It almost crazed her to see his patient, humble and resigned sufferings, and remember that professed Christians for whom he had spent all and worn out his life in their service, cared nothing for his sufferings, and none of them even came to see him, nor did they ever send any relief, not even a kind enquiry that she ever knew. Her heart grew more bitter toward them, and her whole nature became soured. She had no confidence in the piety of any of them, she believed in God, and trusted in Christ, yet it seemed the Lord had cast them off, and would be favorable no more. Even when she tried to pray, it seemed that His mercy was gone from them

forever, and he had shut up His compassion from them.

She could see now that it was her infirmity but then she felt as though the Lord had cast off His own servant, like the church, in the time of old age, sickness and helplessness. Her father would say that all his sufferings would work good, and were for the glory of God, but it was impossible for her to realize it. The thought would even come to her, "Doth God indeed know of our needs? Does He consider us and care for our suffering? The wicked prosper in the world and increase in riches, while the pure and godly suffer untold hardships?" Her father had spent his all and himself in the service of God and the churches and had lived a pure, honest and godly life, yet he was suffering untold privations and bodily pain, and his life was going out from actual want, while many thoroughly wicked had more than heart could wish and were free from pain. These things caused her faith to stagger and her heart to faint. Deep down in her soul she knew that the Lord does all things well, but she could not understand it and fainted.

She was in almost total darkness when her father died. When the end was near he said: "My precious child, the Lord does all things well. What He does thou knowest not now, but shall know. I have prayed that your faith fail not. You will need great faith to meet the sorrow and burdens before you. Trust in the Lord and do good and He will sustain you. I have prayed for you and the Lord has

told me that after you have suffered a while, there will be light and blessings for you." His last words were: "Victory! more than conquerors through Christ who loved us! Mae, Tom is coming to help you. All is well!" Then a sweet smile lighting his face he said: "A life spent in the service of Christ can never be a failure!" Then he sweetly sank to rest. Her mother closed his eyes, saying: "There shall be light at evening time," and then she was prostrated. Kind neighbors came and cared for the burial, and when it was over she seemed to realize that her father's burdens had fallen upon her.

The remaining stock were sold and by the aid of a regular amount in the bank by an unknown friend, the burial expenses were paid, and they moved into a small cottage. Here they began to know the trials of poverty, and she wondered why her father did not foresee this and stop spending his all for people who cared nothing for him. The old bitterness grew more intense during these dark days. She remembered Tom and those bright moments of bliss, and she grew anxious for his return, but then she remembered again that he would be compelled to spend his life in the service of the same kind of churches, and her whole nature revolted against such a life. She was not willing to share his lot with him in life. Without a home, and nothing before him in the world but poverty, want, and afflictions, in the service of churches which would leave him to suffer and die in

want when he had worn himself out for them. She knew that he would feel that it was woe unto me, if I preached not; and she saw nothing before him but afflictions and distress if he did, and she fully resolved never to marry a preacher, with no certain place of abode, and no certain income.

She began to teach that she might make a living, and they learned to live on a little, that they might save the monthly bank amount to educate the children. She also studied that she might prepare herself for better work. All enthusiasm was lost out of her life, and she became simply a bread winning machine. She was not unwilling to teach, but grinding poverty made it such a hard necessity. She gave up all idea of marriage because she could not accept him she loved, and she would never marry without love.

Later on the boys worked a small farm, and she obtained a place in the Academy, and by their combined efforts they were able to make a fairly good support, and her eldest brother was sent to college on the bank account, which had greatly increased and soon they were able to keep all the children in school.

She began to look forward to Tom's return with deep anxiety and dread, and when he came and told her of his ideal love for her, and of the ideal life work and home he had in mind, it all seemed so unreal and out of reach that it well nigh waked up her contempt. His conceptions of herself were so far from the real that they seemed bitter mockery, and

satisfied her that he had no real knowledge of her self, and could have no sympathy for her, much less love. When he spoke of their meeting in May, and referred to her budding loveliness, she saw that he had developed in his mind what she might have been, and she was filled with self loathing by the contrast. It seemed a cruel mockery of her condition. Her undying love for Tom was fully roused and yet he did not even know her real self and could not love her if he did. She was terribly oppressed by this, and blamed her father's church more than ever, and even felt that she would be glad to die and get out of her trouble. The slightest reference to that early experience filled her with this painful, self-conscious unworthiness, which he always interpreted as opposition to himself.

After she had been revived as a Christian, and brought back to a living hope through faith in Christ, she determined to make herself worthy of Tom's best love. She surrendered fully to the Lord and repented of all her rebellious life, and obtained grace to forgive every wrong she had suffered. She found herself entering into full sympathy with Tom in all his plans and work. She studied to make his life happy in every possible way, hoping to win his love from her ideal to her real self. Sometimes she felt that the cup of bliss was just about to be pressed to her lips; but it would be dashed away by his declaring himself more in love with his ideal. On that terrible day when she thought she had lost him,

she learned that he knew and loved her real self; but just as she found it out, he seemed to vanish from her. He thought his suit vain, and had given her up, and was going away to die alone of secret grief. He was so dear that his pain seemed her own, and she would gladly have told him all, but was unable to do so. None can ever know what she suffered during his absence, and especially during the time of his great trouble? It was then she called upon the Lord in her trouble, and he helped her, and made her feel that it would be all right soon. She called to mind the saying of her father, that after suffering a while, the God of all grace would make her perfect, establish, strengthen and settle her. May we not hope for the settling now? God has been working out his own glorious ends all the time.

As they returned home Tom called her attention to the fact that their home would soon be finished and asked that she would name the day of their marriage so they might furnish the home. With happy smile she said: "It must be the first day of May, in memory of that queen of days."



CHAPTER XVI.

A May Day.

The first day of May dawned into a lovely morning, and gave promise of a most perfect day. The sweet perfume of flowers floated in the air, while the genial warmth of sunshine filled, and flooded, and glorified the earth, and all nature was full and running over with happiness. No less happy were Tom and Mae as they took their usual walk to their lovely home. The house and the grounds themselves seemed only a part and product of that lovely morning.

"How bright and lovely the day," said Tom, as he met Mae at the door.

"Yes," she answered, "it is a veritable reprint of that one which seems so far back in the past, only this is much more real and satisfactory."

Tom said: "This is the ripening fruit of the buds of promise of that other May day, and the fruit will fully justify all the opening buds had promised."

Mae asked, "Have I developed up to your marvelous ideal of those days?"

"Far beyond them," said he, "for I never dreamed then of the wealth of your womanly charms, nor the riches of your love, nor the excellency and beauties of your character. All these are far beyond the ken of my brightest dream at that time. I had no conception of them then."

"But, Tom, can you truly say that you are fully satisfied with me as the embodiment of your ideal as I come to you today?"

With joy beaming in his face, Tom answered: "Mae, I am perfectly satisfied. I could not wish to make a single change. The flowers of May are not more beautiful, and I have never found a woman more thoroughly learned, and more consecrated to Christ and His service, none with a clearer head, a larger heart, a stronger will, and lovelier spirit, than you bring me today. Your love for me is all I want it to be, and I have my ideal woman, and am satisfied, you are today all I ask, and I promise never, in no sense, will I grow dissatisfied or love you less."

Mae laid her hand in his and asked with deep interest: "Tom, will you always be patient with me, and bear with me in my times of weakness?"

"Mae, I promise that I will never be angry with you. My love shall grow stronger and purer, and it shall comfort and bear you up at all times."

"But I fear that you do not know me well, and some day you may see that what I was your imagination made me, and what I am you found too late, and be disappointed in me. You seem to see so much more in me than I find in myself, it seems that you must over-estimate me, and will some day be disappointed."

"Dismiss all such thoughts from your mind, none are perfect. But I love you for what I know you to be, and my love will bear all things, hope all things, endure all things, will not be provoked and will never fail. It will be my greatest happiness to make you happy, and

your sorrows shall be mine. My heart is all alive to whatever brings you happiness, and I feel that I love you as I do my own self, and would as soon expect to tire and be dissatisfied with myself as with you. They too shall be as one flesh, and no man ever yet hated his own flesh, and he that loveth his wife loveth himself. As we bear the burdens of life together, share its joys and sorrows, and have daily evidences of each other's love, it will grow stronger and sweeter as the years go by."

Mae said she had been greatly troubled over her rebellious spirit in the past, and had repented of it, and prayed many times for forgiveness. Sometimes she felt that it was all forgiven, and was at perfect peace with God, but it comes up again and darkens the brightness of this glorious day. She was willing to do anything her Lord wanted her to do, and would live on a salary paid by stingy members, or would work to make support while her husband labored for them. She asked that he would pray that all of these wrong feelings and words might be forgiven, and she might realize the presence and forgiveness of the Lord, and have his blessings on her that day.

While they stood on the rock in the greenhouse, Tom prayed that all their sins of the past might be forgiven them through Christ who died for them, and through faith in Him they might realize the fullness of pardon. He asked that the Lord would extend to His servant full forgiveness of any and all rebellion in spirit and word against His providences. That

he would grant unto her a full and sincere repentance, and a consciousness that it was all forgiven her through the atoning blood of Christ, and that she might have such precious realizations of acceptance in Christ, and such sweet peace with God that her heart might overflow with joy and gladness, and she have no more doubt of her forgiveness. He asked the Lord to so bless their lives that they might be obedient to Him in all things, and that the precious blood of Christ might avail for them, and they be made acceptable to God by it. Also that the Lord would abide with them and bless and consecrate their lives to His service here, and that they might live with Him in glory forever.

When the prayer was ended Mae was happy in the Lord. She had received such glorious manifestations of His love and mercy, and of the full and complete cleansing of His precious blood, that she would never doubt her acceptance in Christ any more. That rocky retreat would ever be memorable to her as the place where God met and blessed her, and lifted all the burden from her life and the fear from her heart.

Tom told her she had not said whether she was realizing her ideal in life. Would her plans and ambitions have to be given up and lost forever?

She really had not thought to make the comparison, but now she thought of it, she was realizing far more than her old dream. Her college course had been completed, her home

on the hill was far beyond her early dream, her position in life and the fullness of love were greater than she ever planned. Besides, she was willing to live in poverty and labor for her Savior, yet he had relieved her from an uncertain salary for a support. Her highest ambition had been to possess means to relieve her mother's necessities and educate the children. Now they were all far above want. Her highest ambition now was to be faithful to her God, and a true helpmeet to her husband. She believed very much in his kind of ideals: labor to bring everything up to its highest and best possibility.

Tom said: "Mae, I have a confession to make, and I crave your promise of forgiveness before I make it. If I could have told you on that other glad May morning, it might have saved us both much suffering."

Mae turned and looked him lovingly in the eyes, and said: "Confess, and I will forgive."

He said: "Mae, I was not the poor boy I seemed to be at that time. I had then in my pocket an unopened letter from my dear mother, which conveyed to me many thousands of dollars. By her request I was to open the first envelope when eighteen years old, and the other when twenty-one. She left word that I should say nothing about it to any one. I did want so much to tell you, for I could not expect you to be willing to leave your home of beauty and plenty to share one of poverty with me. But my mouth was sealed, and I prayed that the Lord would give me your heart in his

own good time, if his will, and I felt sure then that he would do it and was satisfied.

"When I opened the first envelope, I found a bank account large enough, with what I made preaching, to meet all my wants, and relieve all the actual necessities of the best friend I ever had."

Mae's face was wreathed with happy smiles as she took his hand in hers, and said: "You furnished father with the means to keep his last days from real want, and me the means to prepare for teaching? I ought to have known that the unknown friend was you, but I never suspected that you had any means. I am so glad it was from you! Father told me that one of his best friends had furnished him the money, and when he died he told me that Tom would help me. You offered to aid me in finishing my education, and in supporting the family, but I could not bear the thought of the obligation, and yet not encourage your suit. I declined because I was your friend. How strange that they should have kept you ignorant of it, and required you to work so hard, and cause you so much trouble."

"They did it to save me from ruin, both for time and eternity. But under providence you were the best help I had except the Lord and my Bible. When I was ready to give up you came to my aid with sympathy and friendship, and urged me to take heart and try again, and under your inspiration I formed purposes that are yet helping me. The sweetest thought when I received my mother's letter was, now

I may seek Mae's love and make her life happy. How gladly would I have saved you from all your trials and hardships! But it seemed impossible. I wanted to tell you about it when I returned home, but felt that it would not do. I almost fear to tell you now."

Mae said: "No, it is all right now. I was willing to live with you in poverty, and I am willing to live with you in wealth. I am happy to know that it was your money that brightened father's last days, and helped me get my education. I return it back to you in giving myself."

Tom said: "Mae, there is more I must tell you while I have your promise of forgiveness. When I received that money from the church for your mother and family, and lent it to the banker, I added a great deal more to it in order to put you and the loved ones financially where you were before the failure. I knew that you would not suspect me, and I wanted your mind free from worry.

"When you were troubled because I was looking after my step-father's business, I wanted to tell you that it was all my own, and he held only a half interest in it while he lived, and it was a small amount compared with that which I received by my mother's will. So now you the more readily forgive me for furnishing the means for putting one of the best mothers in the world out of want, and to educate some of the best boys and girls in the world. I owed it to my best friends, and I paid it in the best way I found possible."

"How blind I have been!" said Mae, after

some moments of silence. "But I had no suspicion that you were not dependent upon your salary. I believed that you were using your own salary freely for our benefit, and was very grateful, but could not say so. Who could have dreamed that those small deeds of kindness shown a poor orphan boy should have produced such wonderful results? I am amazed when I think of the past, and the leadings of providence in our lives. I will never doubt your love for me any more, and you shall never have cause to doubt mine for you."

They returned from their walk, and preparations were made for the marriage. It was to be a quiet affair, with only the family present. A short while before the appointed time the large boarding house was completely filled by the members of Tom's church. Deacon James explained that they had understood it was to be a family affair, and the whole church felt that they were included, and had come to rejoice with their dear pastor and the family of their former pastor on this happy occasion. They were all cordially welcomed and received as part of the family.

All admired Tom's beautiful paintings of Mae, which he had again brought to light, and presented to her as a bridal present. The last was a lovely and perfect development from the first, yet a true likeness of her present self. A beautiful card with the words, "A May Morning," explained the first, and one with, "A May Day," explained the other. Many who examined them felt that the artist had

added the charm and color of love to both pictures.

When Tom and Mae entered the hall there was only standing room for them in the center. She had never seemed more lovely in all her life, and many unconsciously whispered, "How beautiful," "How lovely," while those who a little before had charged the artist with exaggeration now said that the brush could not do justice to her real beauty and loveliness. She was loved by all, and they had never seen her more radiantly happy than now.

Tom's assistant, Robert Hall, met them, and in a tender and appropriate ceremony, pronounced them husband and wife, and invoked the most choice blessings of their Lord upon them.

Earnest, loving words were spoken to them by many present, and congratulations which came from the heart were freely given. The good mother had expected this gathering and prepared some refreshments, which were handed through the crowd, and there was much rejoicing. When they were about to depart Tom lifted up his hands and commended his dear people to the tender mercies and care of the Lord, praying the special blessings of God upon them all during their separation. Many kind wishes went up for their happiness and safe return as they entered the train and were borne away.

Mae was rather sad at leaving home, though only for a short time. She had long wished to visit many of the principal cities and noted

places of her own country, but had been too busy at work. Now she enjoyed this privilege all the more because it had been delayed till she could go with her husband. As they stood together by the grand roaring falls, or the awe-inspiring mountains, she exclaimed, "How great is our God and Father in heaven, who made all these wonderful things!" The great cities were tiresome, and too much crowded, and had too little fresh air. The noise was too great, and the mad rush and hurry seemed enough to wear away the nerves and lives of the people in a short time.

She found it a great relief to escape from these busy, hurrying cities to some grand mountain scenery. But the great restless, discontented ocean, forever rolling and boiling and casting itself upon the rocks, seemed too real and life-like to afford her much pleasure. As she looked upon a rough ocean one day, she said to Tom: "It makes my heart sick to watch the terrible discontent of those caged waters. 'Thus far and no farther,' is the command of thy Maker, and thy proud waves have been stayed. Yet in its mad fury it vainly strives to overleap all bounds and set itself free. O! storm-tossed ocean, how much like human beings! vainly striving to break his bonds asunder, and throw off his cords, and set aside the will and purposes of God! O! the mad folly of such rebellion! What can such impotent rage accomplish?" She turned to Tom and said: "Thank the Lord, all that discontent has been forever put to rest in my

heart, and the fury which lashed my spirit into rebellion has been quelled. It must have been a sweet experience indeed to that poor man when the legion of demons had been cast out of him, and he was sitting clothed and in his right mind at the feet of Jesus. The Lord spake the word of power, and there was a great calm! I think I understand that great calm in my own soul. It would seem as if that legion of demons were here in the sea today, as well as in the raging restlessness of discontented human lives." Then musing awhile, she sweetly sang:

"The winds and the waves shall obey my will:
Peace, be still."

Then low and sweet she sang:

"Master, the terror is over,
The elements sweetly rest,"

and

"They all shall sweetly obey my will:
Peace be still! Peace be still."

Then she continued: "When he speaks the quieting words there is always a great calm, whether it be to the storm-tossed sea, the anguish of sad, troubled hearts, or the torrents of sin, his sweet, restful words, 'Peace be still,' produces a great calm."

"Yes," said Tom, "and I dearly love to know that He is with me in my life and work, for I know

" 'No water can swallow the ship where lies

The Master of ocean and earth and skies,' and when I feel sure that He is with me in my work I am perfectly sure of success. No opposition can overturn our undertakings when Christ is in them. The mad fury and opposition of men are demons to us and our work is no cause for fear or anxiety when the Lord is with us, and in our work. They are fighting against God, and must come to confusion, but all who dwell in the Lord are in perfect safety."

"It is a great joy to know that we are on the Lord's side," said Mae, "and to know that He is with us, and that working together with Him insures complete success.

"'Or demons, or men, or whatever they be,—
They all shall sweetly obey His will.'

"It seems strange that even demons, much less men, should be willing to oppose the Almighty! How blind and insensible we must be, when we rise in our weak rebellion against God. I want my entire life to be conformed to His will, and my highest pleasure to serve Him. I can understand now how you met that storm of opposition in the church, and was unmoved by it. You had faith enough to realize that the Lord was in the ship, and it could never sink, and truly He did cause a great calm." Then looking him lovingly in the face she asked: "But how was it that you were in such great dread, the day you gave way on the rock?"

"I suppose my faith had grown weak and I failed to realize that Jesus was in the ship with

me in that storm. The world was dark and my hope seemed cut off, and my spirit fainted within me. I had faith enough to be willing to sink with my ship, but not enough to assure me that it could never sink."

"Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" said Mae. "Christ has promised to be with us always, and we ought to trust Him all the time. But the terrible fear that I had lost you, just when I had found that you did understand and love me, was too great for me to bear, and I sank under it. But we ought to remember that if God be for us, nothing can successfully be against us."

As they turned away from the restless waves they passed some broken timbers thrown upon the shore, and Tom called attention to them, saying: "The ships where Christ is not on board often go down in the storm, and many perish. As for us, we will go with the Lord, and have Him go with us."



CHAPTER XVII.

The Bethel Home.

Many places of interest which they had intended to visit had to be given up from the scarcity of time. Some business had been mixed with pleasures, as Tom sold an interest in the iron mines and work was to begin in them at once. They also selected such furnishings for their home as their taste and wishes dictated, and this went on before, that it might be in readiness on their return.

They visited the church whose earnest call Tom had been compelled to decline, and he preached for them again, comforting and strengthening the young members and building them up in the faith. The members had many kind and loving words for him and his beautiful bride, and his physician told him she was richly worth all that he had endured in winning her, and he should thank the Lord daily because he had given a spiritual helpmeet in his wife.

Tom had learned that the good doctor and his wife rarely ever worshiped together. She was president of so many things in her church that it required much of her time to look after them, and the needs of her home and children were largely left to the care of others. She had conceived a special dislike for her husband's church because she thought it too old-fashioned and behind the times, while he had no respect for what he believed to be the unscriptural practices of hers, and they each went

to church alone, except when some of the children consented to attend with them. This was the sorrow of the good man's heart, and he felt that it was the mistake of his life. He often regretted his disobedience to God's command, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," but there was no place left for repentance. The children were divided in their opinions, and while two of them had been brought to Christ in the revival meetings, they were yet undecided what church to join. Their preferences led them with their father, but their mother's strong feelings against it held them back.

There were many who envied them their happy palatial home and their great wealth, but they might have saved their trouble, as there was far more happiness in many of the smaller homes around them, where true union of hearts and pure unselfish love dwelt. Referring to this home later, Mae said: "How I do pity those Christians who fail to marry 'only in the Lord.' Why is it that the Lord's people disobey his word and expect his blessing on their disobedience? Thousands are being united together with unbelievers, or with those who hold to entirely different beliefs and practices, and expect to mix these antagonistic things in their homes, and find happiness in them. Common sense, as well as the universal experience of all who have tried it, teach that there can be no real happiness in a home where 'a man's foes are they of his own household.' It must be a miserable agreement

when companions can agree only to disagree. A miserable union this must be."

"These mixed marriages bring the most intolerant things together that the world affords, and try by mixing them to produce a happy home," said Tom. "It is an attempt to mix contraries and contradiction, light and darkness, truth and error in the same lives, and make them true and happy. True marriage means unity, and they two should really be one in the belief and practice of the commands of Christ, if a true ideal happy home is desired. Otherwise the companions are divided in belief, in heart, in sympathy and in interests in their deep secret lives, and can only agree to disagree. In many cases it is evidently a great pity they did not entirely disagree at first."

Mae and Tom were happy in the fact that they were entirely agreed in their belief in Christ and the teachings of His Word. They were one in the faith and practice of the Bible, and they walked together in the commandments and ordinances of Christ with love and joy. There was no possible discord to come into their home from this cause, and they were closely agreed in their tastes, aims and objects in life, but above all other things they were heartily united in their love and obedience to Christ. They each had studied to know the will of God as taught in His Word, and believing it true, they found great pleasure in doing what He commands.

Mae was real happy when they turned their faces homeward. While there was much to

be seen and enjoyed abroad, yet there was no place half so sweet nor interesting to her as her own dear home. The loved ones there had so long been dependent upon her, that they sadly needed her, and she was equally at a loss without them. There was great joy in the old home when the day was announced for their return, and they were equally happy to be at home again.

As they returned over the new road, it seemed that a new town was springing up by magic. The iron works were going up, the homes for the miners, new dwellings and other new enterprises were being started. It was evident that the old sleepy town had waked up, and would soon become a restless city. Luckey, who had Tom's real estate in hand, was almost wild with delight, because of the marvelous increase in the value of the property.

The loved ones were waiting to welcome them, and they were carried immediately to their own Bethel home, where they were met by other members of the church, who had prepared a delightful feast for their welcome home. When all had enjoyed this and the guests departed, they passed through their well-furnished rooms and examined every part of the home with great satisfaction. Then they bowed themselves down before the Lord, the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and thanked Him for their home, and for all of His innumerable gifts to them. They prayed that in Christ He would dwell with them there, and

make it a real Bethel home to them. They prayed for His divine providence over it and them, and that they might obey the Lord in all things. When the prayer was ended, Mae touched the keys of her sweet-toned piano and they joined in singing:

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word."

Then Tom read from the Bible, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," and after this Psalm, he read also: "The Lord hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear."

They were happy in their new home, where all that money and taste could provide had been done to make it comfortable and happy. Mae's rooms had been furnished after her own special taste, and formed into a place of beauty and comfort. The library was stored with the best and most choice books and periodicals, and furnished with inviting seats, and adorned with many interesting paintings and statues. The dining-room was as beautiful as a May morning. There were to be spent so many hours of sweet family union there that they made it a place of beauty and good cheer. Their family meals were to be happy occasions, and nothing was omitted which could improve the brightness of these hours. The art room was a bright, lovely place furnished with models, beautiful paintings and all the implements which would invite the artist to his work.

Neither grandeur nor display had been sought in any part of their home, but beauty and comfort, so that it might be a shelter for the body and a sweet retreat for mind and soul. They had learned that "godliness with contentment is great gain," and they were sure that gain without godliness would be of little worth. They had the love of God in their hearts constraining their lives, and they prayed for contented, unselfish and thankful hearts, and lives obedient to His will. There was freedom from want in their home, and they prayed for equal freedom from pride and selfishness. They had received all things bountifully from the Lord, and while they received and enjoyed them with gratitude, they wanted to be faithful stewards of the Lord's bounty. Their home was to be the brightest, best and happiest place on earth to them, meeting all the demands of life, possible to be met, and leaving it needful to go abroad for as little as possible. They were wise enough not to seek to satisfy the demands of their immortal souls with the things of earth, but sought and found their highest joy in God, and their greatest pleasure in His presence and love. They never lost sight of the fact that their home was to be to them in the fullest sense the house of God and the very gate to heaven.

The school commencement came off soon after their return, and Mae's two brothers, Joe and Henry, and her sisters, Alice and Grace, were among those who graduated, and she looked upon them with great pleasure and

thanksgiving. She had toiled hard to raise and educate them, and now as they were through school and ready to enter upon the realities of life, she felt that she had much invested in them, and was happy in their prospects. The sisters were well-developed, intelligent, consecrated Christian women, and the young men, while specimens of strong, healthy young manhood, were excellent scholars and earnest Christians. She felt that she was richly paid for all her toil of the past by their true bright lives. The brothers took places in the school as teachers. Alice was soon after married to Doctor Hall, who built his home near the Bethel home.

The boarding house was sold and Mae's mother came to live with Tom and Mae, also Grace and Joe and Henry were a part of the family in the new home, and they were truly a happy family when gathered in their new home. Grace was the youngest of the family, and though loved by all, she was unselfish and seemed to live only for others. She was engaged to be married to Robert Hall, Tom's assistant pastor, who was now supplying the city church to which Tom had been called, for a few months, with a view to settling with them permanently. She was rejoiced to learn from his letters that he was pleased with his new field, and that the members seemed also to be satisfied with his work.

It was a great pleasure to Tom to be able to have so many of the family of his old friend with him in his own home. He had promised

him before his death that he would look after their welfare, and never lose sight of their interests, and it was a great pleasure that they all loved and trusted him as they might trust a father. He had not only saved them from want, and educated them, but had so associated their interests with his own enterprises that they were rapidly accumulating wealth. Their mother owned an equal share in the school, the coal and iron mines, as well as the real estate business.

Mae's mother was greatly delighted with her rooms in the new home, although for a time their similarity to her own sweet home in the palmy days of her early married life almost overcame her self-control. Yet she was truly happy in having so much of her own loved lost home back again. It brought back many memories of her true, loved husband, who had made for her such a sweet, happy home.

She said her husband had put all he had and was into the Lord's cause, and they were left with almost nothing, yet the Lord was with them and raised up a friend to help them, and by the blessing of the Lord her children had grown up true men and women. The Lord had given her more means than they had ever possessed. She had so much to be thankful for in the love of such children as hers, which was to her of greatest worth.

She would live a contented and happy life in the Lord, try to do all the good she could in the world, and seek to be ready to go home when the Lord comes for her.

"We hope it will be many years yet before you go home, mother," said Mae, throwing her arms about her, "and love and peace shall brighten and gladden your life, and you will brighten your children's lives, we trust, for many years."

Tom told her how he had longed for the love of his mother through all the long years of his lonely life, and how she had made bright places in this great darkness, and now it would give him great joy to help brighten her life all the remainder of the way. He found it a great pleasure to be able to do anything for the help of the family of his true friend in the days of his weakness and need.



CHAPTER XVIII.

Ideals Realized.

Tom gave himself wholly to his pastoral work after his marriage, and was greatly rejoiced by the spirituality and faithfulness of his church in all things. He realized that our sufficiency is of the Lord, and relying upon God he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but preached the Word of God and Christ crucified. He regarded the church of Christ as his body in the world, and endeavored to keep it pure, and develop all its resources according to the teachings of the Bible. Their worship was fervent and spiritual, their songs of praise were joyful and happy, their piety and godliness were deep and real, and they came together to worship God, and listen to His Word. Their pure lives and earnest piety caused those who were unsaved among them to drift off to other churches, or else turn to Christ.

He found his work a constantly increasing source of joy, and was happier in his people than he had ever dreamed during those bright ideal days of his student life. To say that he realized his ideal church would only express the facts feebly. They responded liberally to every call upon them for the Lord's cause, and kept up with the growth of the town, planting strong church centers, which finally grew into self-sustaining churches.

Mae often wondered that such a kind, consecrated, loving and liberal church should have

been developed out of the very same people who had almost literally starved her father and his family. But she understood that we reap as we sow, and her father, under a mistaken idea of duty, had planted the principles of starvation in his church, and had reaped practically that which he planted. Tom reaped differently, because he planted the plain teachings of the Bible. His constant aim for himself and people was to abide in Christ as the branch in the vine, and have the words of Christ abide in them by faithful obedience to all he has commanded. The one question in his life and work was, "What does Jesus say do?" and his one object was to do all that Jesus commands, and lead his people to know and do what he has said.

They magnified the church and made it honorable before the world. When their old building became too small to accommodate their members, they gathered the means first, and then built the Lord's house without debt.

When Tom first began his work with the church most of the members thought the pastor's only duty was to feed the sheep, and the sheep nothing to do but to be fed. They were opposed to all mission work, and paying the pastor, and the money needed for church expenses and repairs was left for the women to raise by suppers, fairs and festivals, mainly from those who were not members. It was confidently believed and affirmed that the members could not be prevailed upon to contribute, and the effort to do so would drive

them away from the church. But under kind, loving and patient scriptural teaching they were soon developed into willing obedience to the commands of Christ.

One lovely day in May, when the world seemed young and happy, and was all lovely with budding leaves and beautiful flowers, Tom and Mae were sitting in their rock-floored green-house, and Mae handed him a medal, asking if it spoke anything of the past? He took it tenderly in his hand, as he said: "This speaks of the early spring time of life, the budding of hope, the earnest of rich harvests of success and happiness. It tells of the time of struggle, failure and success, and the answer to prayer, in which the Lord gave me the friendship and sympathy of a true, unselfish girl, which led me to a determination that brought success, which has not forsaken me till this happy hour. It represents the turning point in my life, and the gracious influence which, under the Lord, led me to whatever of success I have since realized. The fact that she was not ashamed of me in my poverty, and was willing to own me as her friend, put new courage into my life and led me to form purposes which have never forsaken me."

Mae said, in thoughtful manner: "I recognized your real mental and moral worth, and my whole nature was stirred by the contempt of those who were so far below you in mind and moral worth. I have known but few happier days than the one in which you won this medal. As I looked to the future I felt that

I could see you realizing your highest and best hopes, and was so happy to be able to help you, even to a small extent, in reaching your high destiny. At times I would be perfectly happy in the thought that my destiny would be interlinked with yours. Especially was this true during those days of your struggles and triumphs in school, and during your sickness that was so near unto death."

"I felt at that time that my life and lot were so far below yours that I could hope only for your friendship and sympathy, of which I determined to be worthy. I had no higher earthly ambition than to be worthy in every sense to enjoy your friendship through life, and whatever success I have so far reached in life, or may reach, under providence, your friendship and sympathy have more influenced that end than all other causes combined."

Then he lifted the small medal on his watch chain and said: "This medal reminds me of a friendship stronger than death, and of cries and prayers unto God who heard and answered. It tells of the way opened by the Lord for my education, and reminds me of the first vision of my ideal home. It also tells of the time I prayed for my best friend till assured that the Lord heard, and would give her all the help needed, and it reminds me, too, that I have prayed for her every day since then till now."

With a shade of sadness Mae said: "Yes, that was a dark time in my life, and it seemed to cast its shadow before, even to that sick

room, when I so deeply felt the need of your prayers for me. The fact that my father was in trouble, and later when I had to leave school, father's losses and sad death almost caused my heart to faint. I was filled with wonder that those who tried to serve the Lord so faithfully as you and father, should have such hard and bitter experiences. I prayed for grace to sustain my faith."

"I wondered over these things," said Tom, "until I read of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. I was surprised that it was written of Christ, 'Many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.' He was stricken and smitten of God, and afflicted. He was chastened, wounded, bruised, oppressed, afflicted, cut off, put to grief, and in travail of soul bore the sins of many. When I remembered these things, I thought we should arm ourselves likewise with the same mind which led Christ to willingly suffer for us. Since we are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, we should not think that some strange thing had happened to us when trials come. His sufferings came before He entered into glory; so we may have to go through many tribulations to enter heaven. But we shall be more than conquerors through Christ, for they shall all work a far more and eternal weight of glory."

Mae said: "It has just occurred to me that there is great difference in the experiences of those who study the Bible and live by its

teachings, and those who do not study it. I groped my way in darkness, wondering why the Lord dealt with me and others as he did; while you walked through places equally dark, with the Bible making the darkness light, and enabling you to endure as seeing him who is invisible, and to commit the keeping of your soul, in suffering, to him in well-doing as to a faithful Creator."

Mae read from her Bible: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," and, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture." "I fear," said she, "that many who enter in by Christ and are saved, do not understand all they might about going in and going out, and finding pasture, and realizing the abundant life in Christ."

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," said Tom. "As sheep go into the fold for safety, and go out for pasturage, so the saved, having access to God by faith in Christ, are fully protected, and are led by the Holy Spirit in Christ into green pastures, and by the side of still waters. With such a Shepherd there is no need that the Lord's sheep should suffer any want. His resources are full and power supreme."

Again Mae read: "'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' He gave his life for us that we might live by faith in Him, but in what way may we obtain the more abundant life?"

"All who believe in Christ have eternal life, and shall never come into condemnation, but have passed out of death into life. They live by the life of Christ, and because He lives they shall live also, for He is their life. All believers have Christ, and in Him they have the abundant life. Those who know, believe and obey His Word, not only find safety in Him, but are led by the Spirit into the green pastures of His love, grace and spiritual blessings, till they walk in love, have the fruit of the Spirit developed in their lives, and grow up into Christ in all things. These by abiding in Christ, and by having His words abide in them, enjoy more of the fullness of life in Christ. All believers have this more abundant life in Christ, but all do not by any means realize in this life the fullness of life they have in Christ."

Mae thought it is a sad day for a Christian when he neglects to read and obey the Bible. When a believer forgets the Bible, and fills his mind and heart with something else, then he may look for darkness and loneliness in spiritual joys. The darkest and saddest part of her life was when she thought she was too busy to read the Bible. Strange that soul-hunger does not lead us all to feed upon the Word of God! But the more one neglects to read and study the Bible, the less inclination he seems to have to read it. The more one reads and obeys it, the more he is drawn to it.

Tom thought the neglect of the Bible, to know and obey it, often comes from the

fact that the soul feeds upon other things which deaden its hunger, or by yielding to sin, the Spirit is grieved and the spiritual perceptions are blunted, so that they fail to discern and feed upon the Word of God. Besides, when the mind and heart are filled with the world and the life with sin, the believer is unfit to be used by the Lord in his holy work. Like vessels in the home the heart and lives of Christians need to be kept clean to be fit for the Lord's service. We would turn away from the most choice food if served to us in unclean vessels. Much more should the infinitely holy God's vessels be presented purified and clean in His service. But to live in sin grieves the Holy Spirit who dwells within them, and disqualifies them for acceptable and efficient service.

Mae called to mind her own unhappy, fruitless life before Tom's return to her, and the bitter repentance, the confession and forsaking of her sin, and finally the sweet joy and peace of forgiveness, after he began his pastoral work. How fully, then, she realized her own extreme weakness, and leaned upon Christ for strength! And how glorious was the realization of the fact that the precious blood of Christ cleanseth from all sins, and Christ was her worthiness, and in His righteousness she was accepted of God! She was enabled to live by faith in Christ, and obtain strength in her weakness. The Bible opened up as a new book to her soul, and knowing and doing what the Lord says, had made her life new. Her

chief joy was to love and obey Christ, and realize his glorious saving power, and rejoice in His presence. The Bible then became the real living Word of God to her, and under the power of the Holy Spirit she learned what the Lord says, and found joy and blessing in doing it. By constant communion with God in prayer, and by meditating on His word, day and night, and doing what it says do, she found her spiritual strength increasing and her life gaining influence for good.

Tom reminded her how their chief joy and happiness in their home had come from the presence and blessings of God, which they sought by constant communion with Him, and obedience to His holy word.

"We must meet the condition, if we would enjoy the blessing," said Mae as they returned to the house. "We believe in Christ to be saved and obey Him to be blessed. No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly; if through the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live; if we honor the Lord, He will honor us! sow to the Spirit, we shall reap life; and all who forsake houses or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Also, "He that laboreth receiveth wages, and gathers fruit unto eternal life," and we are to labor in his vineyard and whatever is right he will pay.

Tom answered that the kingdom of God shall be given to a nation bringing forth the

fruit thereof. Though fully saved by grace, we are rewarded according to our works. "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

With deep feeling Mae replied: "I am more and more impressed by the fact that Christians' lives are happy and useful, here and hereafter, only as they are obedient and faithful to Christ. It is strange that Christians should lose sight of the fact that all losses suffered for Christ and His gospel, are gain, and all compromise in His service is loss; how is it that they lose sight of the hundredfold reward received for losses here as well as the eternal life to come."

Tom said thoughtfully: "It is true that all who put little or nothing into the service of Christ, get little or nothing out of it multiplied a hundredfold; while those who put loving service and sacrifice into His kingdom receive it back a hundredfold. What increase of love, joy, knowledge, blessings, temporal and spiritual, the faithful servants of Christ receive!"

"Yes," said Mae, "father and mother put their all into the Lord's kingdom, and I wondered that they did not grieve over it, but they remembered the recompense of reward.

CHAPTER XIX.

Christ In The Home.

Tom and Mae built their home life upon the Word of God. They studied the Bible to know the commands of Christ that they might do them. By hearing and doing the sayings of Christ they would build their house upon the rock, and it would stand though all the storms of life beat upon it. Their first and highest aim was to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and to know and do all Christ commands, that they might manifest their love to Christ, and that they might realize His love and that of the Father, and that they might come and manifest themselves to them, and dwell with them. They read where Jesus says: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." They purposed to know and do the commandments of Christ that they might realize the presence and love of Christ and the Father, and also realize their indwelling presence. They loved the Lord Jesus and sought to please Him in all they did; and found by constant communion with Him joy, peace and strength to purify and keep their lives bright, doing what Christ says in the Bible, and by the leading and comforting of the

Holy Spirit, and the presence and indwelling of the Lord to make their home a Bethel-home. Here Christ should be their means of communication with heaven, and through Him they would constantly approach the Father, and obtain all the grace and help they needed from His rich throne of grace. Here they hoped to dwell in places made heavenly in Christ Jesus, and to have all the fruits of the Spirit developed in them. They regarded the presence and blessings of God as the very first essential to an ideal home; for in His presence there is fullness of joy. In this home they wanted to enjoy many foretastes of their heavenly home in the Father's house, and be the better prepared for their eternal home with God.

Their love for each other and for the mother and her family, was of that kind which seeks not its own, is kind and never provoked, and never fails. They lived for the Lord and each other, and the experiences of the past led them to add fresh fuel to the flame of love that it might never burn low, nor grow less. As the years go by in this manner they would never forsake their first love, but have it grow stronger and purer all the while.

There were many elements in the home to bring happiness. It had been prepared as a shelter from want, a retreat from cares and the burdens of life, a place of rest for body and mind; but the heart can never find all it needs in the things of earth, and these Christian people were wise enough not to try to satisfy their soul longings with worldly pleasures, and

had accustomed themselves to drink from the deep flowing fountains of spiritual joys. They had gone to Christ, and he had given them the water of life, which was in them fountains of living water springing up into everlasting life, satisfying their own thirst and flowing in rivers of spiritual blessings to many others in the world.

In the course of time there were three manly boys and one sweet girl in their home. They were very dear to their parents, and were received as gifts from the Lord, to be brought up and taught for Him. They believed that they were responsible to the Lord for them until they were able to be responsible for themselves; and long before they knew that they had any wills, they had been taught to submit to the will of their parents. Having learned early to submit to authority, and to do right because it is the will of God, their future training and development was an easy matter. They were early taught of the wonderful love of God to us sinners, and the gift of His Son to die for our sins, that we might be saved by grace through faith in Christ. They were the children of many prayers and much loving instruction, and they early gave evidence of conversion to Christ. To them was given much tender, loving attention to mould their characters and form their habits aright. There was much to repress as well as much to develop, and no one could do this as well as their loving parents. Mae gave much of her time to the care of the children

and was richly repaid in their love and rapid development in knowledge and character.

This happy home was not free from affliction. Every "heart knows his own bitterness," and they were not exempt from sorrow. But with David they could say: "This is my comfort in my afflictions, for thy word hath quickened me." "I flee unto thee to hide me."

They were of that happy number whose afflictions are balanced by their comforts. They did not turn to temporal things for relief when distress invaded their home; for they knew by past experience, as well as by the deep spiritual needs of the soul, that all these springs of comfort would run dry and leave them weak and faint. They fled to God to hide them in their trouble.

Many others have known what it is to give up their first born, and they can understand the first real sorrow that came to this new home. They received their first born, a son, as a gift from the Lord, and though they knew he was only entrusted to them to be raised for God, yet they never suspected that they should hold the trust for so short a time. They felt that they had received a man from the Lord, and fully expected him to live and grow to manhood. His sweet smiles were rays of sunshine in their home, which daily grew brighter by reason of his presence. They were careful not to allow him to have any of their thoughts or feelings which belonged to the Lord. They were thankful for him, and prayed for grace and wisdom to care for and

raise him aright. Daily prayers went up that should he live he might be saved by the atoning blood of Christ, and grow up to be a godly and useful man.

But the dear little one, who had grown so bright and so dear, suddenly sickened from a cold, and from the first he was in great pain, and suffered much. All was done that human love and medical skill could do, but he continually grew worse. How humbly and trustingly Tom and Mae prayed for the life of the precious sufferer, if it could be the Lord's will to spare him, and for grace to submit to the will of the Lord. It was a matter of deep astonishment that one under six months old could suffer as he did. Almost every breath became a prayer for the precious one, so deeply were their hearts moved by his great sufferings. Towards the last it became evident that they must give up their boy, and it only remained for them to flee to God for hiding and comfort in their sorrow. They prayed for grace to be resigned to the Lord's will, and that their faith might not stagger, nor their hearts faint under this chastening of the Lord; and it was very precious to them in this time of deep trouble to hear their Lord saying to them: "Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee. For I am the

Lord thy God, the holy one of Israel, thy Saviour." It was sweet beyond all measure to be assured of the presence of their Lord and have him manifest himself to them in this hour of sore need; and to realize that the everlasting arms were underneath them, and his grace sufficient for them. They went to Christ with their great load of trouble, and He gave them rest by His own gracious presence, and sustaining grace.

Before the precious babe went home he opened his large knowing eyes, and looked at his parents as though he was conscious of his departure, and would bid them meet him in his eternal home. Tom said: "Yes, my son, by the grace of God we will meet you in heaven." And while he yet looked earnestly in his face, he said: "My son, Jesus will be with you and give you endless joy and happiness." His sweet eyes closed, and while his little hand was lovingly pressed by his father, his precious spirit went home to God. The parents lowered their heads in silent prayer, while they wrestled with their great sorrow. As Mae pressed his lifeless form, she said: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

They put him away among the flowers, and the sweet birds sang their happy songs over his resting place. The parents made the place beautiful, and here they sat and talked of the resurrection day, when their boy should be raised from the dead with all who are in their graves, and he with all who loved and

served Christ, would come forth unto life eternal. Here they learned to commune with their own hearts and be still, and they walked more softly before the Lord by reason of these things. When the waves of grief would rise above them, they fled to the Lord to hide them, and found a sure refuge in Him.

As they sat here one day and talked of their precious one, Mae asked with tears: "Why were we allowed to keep him so short a time? Was it because of our sin? Surely, we did not idolize him!"

Tom answered: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. We know that he has been taken from the evil to come, and is safe at home for all eternity. But had he lived, we can not say what his life might have been. Wealth transmitted to children has often been the means of their eternal ruin. For how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. All things are possible with God, and he can make the rich humble, self-denying and believing, so they will trust in God and consecrate all they have to His service. Yet the love of money has been the ruin of many. What ever the reason may have been, we know that our dear Lord does not willingly afflict His children, and he will make all things work together for good to them who love Him, and these afflictions are so light in comparison with the far more exceeding and

eternal weight of glory to all who are exercised by them. We do well to be perfectly resigned to the will of our Father in this thing, for He is infinite in wisdom and love, and has the very best of reasons for what He does. Our comfort is in knowing that he is safe at home with the Lord, while had he lived, we might have seen him a wicked man of the world, saying to God as many do, 'Depart from me, for I desire not a knowledge of Thy ways.' Some parents have been rebellious in their blind grief and demanded of the Lord the lives of their children without submission to His will, and have lived to see their sad mistake when too late."

"Yes," said Mae, "one mother said to father, 'Do not say the will of the Lord be done! Lord I will take my child any way! Only spare me my child!' The child lived to become the curse of her life, and she went down to the grave from sorrow over his ruined life. A similar request was granted, and the child lived a demented imbecile all her days, and the mother often said it would have been so much better had she been taken in infancy. We will look to God for grace to enable us to cheerfully submit to His will."

They walked softly before the Lord and He delivered them from their sore grief by giving them grace to bear their loss; and by reason of their great need of help, and the large supplies of grace which they received, brought them close to God, and caused them to draw from him by faith as they had special

need. It was their comfort now that they had purposed to so live that they would have the manifestation of the Lord's presence with them all the time, and they were more determined to know and do all that Jesus says do, than ever before.

Four other children were given after the firstborn had been taken home, and the parents' hearts were made glad by these additional trusts from the Lord. The firstborn had been named for Mae's father, the second bore his father's name in full, the third was William, and the youngest was Henry, after Mae's youngest and best loved brother, and the daughter was Mae. She was next in age to her brother Tom, and exercised much influence over her brothers for good. William was much like his father. He had a severe spell of sickness while he was very young, and they thought they would have to give him up, too. While his parents prayed for his life it was suggested to them that if spared he might grow up in unbelief and sin, and be lost. They prayed that he might be taken, rather than live and die in unbelief, but if the will of the Lord that he might live, they prayed that he might be brought to know Christ early in life, and live a consecrated useful life. They called upon God in this their day of trouble, and He heard them and delivered them and they glorified Him. Their prayers were answered and he improved and finally recovered.

They began early to teach him and the others, of Jesus and His love and death for

our sins, and of faith in him as the means by which we are saved, and love to Christ as the constraining cause of obedience to Christ. It was a happy day in their home when the child began to improve, but his first early interest in his soul's salvation, and the first evidences of his faith in Christ was cause for greater rejoicing in their hearts. Their prayers, faith and efforts all seemed to center in this one, while all were objects of earnest prayer and gospel teaching. The seeds of gospel truth germinated earlier in his heart than in any of the others, and he was the first to give evidence of a new heart and faith in Christ, but all the others soon followed.



CHAPTER XX.

True Mother Work.

As the years go by the Bethel-home increases in brightness. The love of the children for each other, and for their parents becomes a source of great happiness. They are growing up in an element of pure unselfish love, and its influence is of great power in the formation of their better lives. Their parents had prayed, from their earliest childhood, that they might be saved early in life; and while they led them to live moral lives, they faithfully taught them to depend upon God for spiritual life and salvation through faith in Christ. They were made familiar with the way of salvation by grace through faith in Christ; and while they were young were taught the Holy Scriptures by which they were made wise unto salvation through faith in Christ. They made the gospel plain to them, and kept the way of salvation clearly before them; and it became evident that they each had been brought under the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit, and were exercising faith in Christ and were in living union with him.

The new life implanted in them by the Holy Spirit was tenderly developed by feeding them on the pure, unadulterated milk of the Word that they might grow thereby. The love of Christ shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit was developed by the teachings of the Bible. They were taught that God manifested His love towards us, in that while we

were yet sinners, he gave Christ to die for us, and we ought to manifest our love to Him by lovingly doing all He commands. They were also taught that Jesus wants us always and at all times to do what He says do; and to ask 'What does Jesus say do?' and search the Bible to see what He says, and then lovingly do it. In this way we are to manifest our love to Christ, and His commands will lead us to love one another with a pure heart fervently. The Bible was constantly read and repeated, and its sweet truths were constantly kept before their minds, that they might learn to live by every word of God.

Little Mae, like her mother, came to the church to tell her Christian experience when she was yet a small child. She told how she had felt her sinfulness and her lost, helpless condition, and tried to do better and make her self good, and had failed. Then she told of her joy when she knew of the love of God for sinners, and Christ's death for our sins, and how she trusted in Christ and His death for her, and found sweet peace with God. Then she told of her love for Christ, and how she gave herself fully to Him.

One of the members asked if she thought her heart had been changed. Because we must be born again before we can be Christians and be saved.

She answered: "Yes, I think I have; because once I did not feel myself a lost sinner, as I do now, and I did not love Jesus as my Saviour but I do now. My father says that none

ever love Jesus until they have new hearts, and that all who love Him have been born of God. I know that I do love Him as my Saviour."

The members asked her other questions and finally one asked how she expected to hold out, and bring no reproach to the church, if she was received?

She answered: "I am trusting Christ to save me, and He is able to keep me from falling; and mother will teach me what Jesus says do, and I will ask Him to help me do it."

When they stopped questioning, and were discussing the propriety of baptizing one so young, she left them and went to her brother Tom, and asked if he loved Jesus? He was weeping and did not answer, and her voice could be heard over the house as she asked: "Brother, do you love Jesus?" And when he said he did love Him, she asked again: "Why don't you tell it then? He says we must confess Him before men, and not be ashamed of Him, and He will not be ashamed of us."

He went back with her, and told the church that he had loved and trusted in Christ for some time, and felt that He was his Savior, and his sins were all forgiven through faith in Christ. They were both received as members. It was a lovely picture as they two went hand in hand down into the water and were baptized by their father into Christ. Their parents had been satisfied for some time of their change of heart, and had taught them the commands of Christ, and left them to the

moving of the Holy Spirit by the Word of God. They were equally as well satisfied of the change of heart in the other two, but taught them the commands of Christ, and prayed for the guiding of the Holy Spirit. These home teachings had led the other two to obey Christ, and the same means were employed to lead them into all the ways of righteousness. They labored in this way to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

It was not long before the other two were received into the church. All who knew them received them as true followers of Christ, and were carefully taught at home the nature and responsibility of such a profession. Here also they were taught the teachings of Christ, and were led to know the Bible, and to put into practical life all it says do. In this way their home became a pleasant training school for coming life, and for heaven, and they were saved from many errors, while true and useful habits were formed. They were carefully taught and developed in mind, body and heart, with the desire that they might grow into the fullest extent of their possibilities. This was largely the work of sweet mother love in the home.

A neighbor, who was a much noted worker in the many church societies, asked Mae if she was not neglecting her duty and losing great possibilities in her failure to help the women push forward their great efforts to evangelize the world, and lift up humanity, and the good woman grew eloquent in her great fear that

Mae and her family were having their good things in this life, and would have their evil things in the life to come.

Mae answered her that it might all be true; but she thought not. In the first place she found in the church a demand for all the work she could do; and the duties of the home and the church she found plainly commanded by her Lord, but had not been able to find anything in the Bible commanding her to engage in these societies organized by men to do the church's work.

Their wealth had come to them by inheritance, unsought, and by a wise foresight her husband had made certain investments which were being developed into blessings to many others, as well as to themselves. She fully understood the "love of money is the root of all evil," and while many covet it they err from the truth and pierce themselves through with many sorrows. The determined purpose to obtain riches at any cost leads into many temptations and sins, while the possession of wealth leads many into foolish pride, and fills the heart with vain and ungodly feelings. As their riches had increased they had prayed for such grace that they might not set their hearts upon them, and might not be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but trust in the living God and be rich in good works.

She was glad to say her home was truly happy, and they had much to enjoy in it, but the chief source of their happiness was in God, and in obedience to His commands. They all

loved the Lord Jesus, and trusted Him for life and salvation, and because they loved Him, they determined to know all the Lord says in His Word, and do it. They found much pleasure and delight in knowing and doing the will of the Lord. It was their special desire that theirs should be a Bethel-home, indeed, and they had succeeded to a good degree. The Lord did come and walked with them, and dwelt with them in their home, and they were made to rejoice in His presence and love.

The danger of trusting in riches and not in God and being lifted up with pride, and other hurtful lusts, they happily escaped. They had also escaped the cares of the world and the pleasures of life in choking the Word of God, and hindering it in bearing fruit in their lives. She had noticed that even the poor may depart from God in their trust, and be over anxious about the things of life, and grow discontented and bitter. Christians should find their chief good and joy in the Lord, and should delight themselves in him, no matter what their lot may be.

Her own Christian life had been more endangered by the withholding of good, than by the giving. She was then untaught in the Bible, and was undeveloped in Christian character and experience, and was not prepared to resist the evils which beset her. She said: "My foot had well nigh slipped, and I was almost gone when my husband found me in the school room. I was bitter at the unjust treatment of my father by the members of his

church, in withholding his support. I had failed to stay my heart on God, and thereby realize the helping power of God. If we are in wealth, He can preserve us from its snares; and if in poverty, He can preserve us from its corroding cares, and sustain us under its burdens and trials. We are kept by the power of God unto Salvation in all things temporal, as well as spiritual.

These principles form the foundation of our happiness, and we feel that they are not hurtful to us. We try by teaching and prayer to so raise our children that they may not turn from God to the world. Our highest wish for them is that they may obey God, and enjoy His presence, love and favor."

Her friend confessed that she had almost entirely lost sight of her home work, and for years they had known but little of the joys of salvation, and the peace of God. They were laboring to accumulate something so as to give them and their children a better position in society. The cares and worries of life, and the anxious thought to economize and save had removed all joy and practical godliness from their home life. Her husband and children belonged to the church, but gave little evidence of piety, and took little interest in the things of Christ. They manifested a strong leaning towards the world, and were little comfort to her, because of frivolous, worldly lives. Her own life, as well as her home, seemed a failure, and she could not free herself from the consciousness of blame.

By contrasting her own life with Mae's experience, she saw that she had been looking to the things of the world for happiness and had been disappointed. They had gone to the broken cisterns of earth, and found no water to satisfy their souls. Her home was fast going to ruin. The will and commands of God were not considered in it, each one lived for himself and sought his own individual pleasure independent of the commands of God, and the interests of others. They went to church to be entertained by the singing and to enjoy the beauty and oratory of the preaching, and not to worship God and be lifted up by the truth through the Spirit to better hopes, and purer lives. She had made a sad mistake in life, and in her home. She had lived a discontented and unhappy life, and instead of leading her family by her influence and example to Christ, manifesting in her own life what grace can do in making us holy and happy in the Lord, she had turned them away from God to the world. She had been too busy with the great interests of the independent movement of women's work, attending meetings, planning great and strong efforts against crime and evil in general, while her own family, individually, were fast going to the bad, for the lack of true Christian mother influence and work at home.

Under Mae's influence she resolved to begin anew the unequalled task of Christian mother work in her own home. As she had been largely the means of the ruin of her home, she

would begin the effort to bring her family back to the service of the Lord. But she realized that she must first return to God herself, and have Him return to her, before she could help the others. By faith and earnest prayers she sought help to give up every wrong thing, and repent of all her sins, and obtain grace and help for her great work at home. She came back fully to the Lord, and trusted him for strength and spiritual power to do her work.

She never fully knew the depths of her need and the utter ruin of her home until her eldest son was brought home to her so drunk that he did not know his own mother. Her repentance that night, as she wept over her fallen boy, was deep and true, and she blamed herself ever after for his sin and shame. Lovingly and tenderly she won him back to purity, and self-control, and broke off his old associates, and habits, and won him to Christ.

She put her whole self and time into the work of rescuing her home, and saving her own family from eternal ruin. She told them plainly how she had failed to live for Christ, and failed to do her own home work, and because of this neglect had lost her Christian joy, peace and influence. She had come back to the Lord, and was determined to study the Bible to know and do God's will. She had determined to know what Jesus says do, and do it; and she wanted them all to join her in the same purpose.

She wept and prayed a long time over her

wandering, ungodly boys and worldly irreligious girls, before they manifested any signs of turning. At first her husband grew more ungodly and manifested decided displeasure toward his wife, as he saw her turning so heartily to the Lord, but she was patient, and kind, and more prayerful, and finally he yielded and gave up his wicked life, and turned to the Lord's service.

From this time her life grew brighter, and her home began to put out of it the evidences and proofs of the presence and service of satan, and began to manifest the presence and blessings of God. The children began to turn to God and her heart and home were full of spiritual joy and praise.



CHAPTER XXI.

Never Failing Love.

It is not intended to make the impression that there were no clouds to cast their shadows over the inside life of the Bethel-home. While the children were all Christians, and were trying by divine grace to live pure and obedient lives, yet there were many things in which the old nature had to be put off, and the new man put on. They had been shielded from many of the corrupting influences from without, and the development of the evils within were carefully watched and repressed. They were well instructed in the regular studies of the school, and in art and music also at home. Henry, the youngest, was a born artist, and loved the beautiful, and spent much of his leisure time copying from nature, both with pencil and brush. Tom was too much inclined to think less of the comforts of others, while William was self-forgetting, and delighted to remember "even Christ pleased not himself." "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification." All the children were bright, healthy and kind; and were growing up under the influences of a pure, loving, godly home.

One day at school Henry noticed the face of a very angry boy, and sketched the angry, wicked expression of the face so true to nature that the boys were wild with delight over it. That night he told his mother, he believed there is a demon of some kind as well as the

good Spirit in every one, even in Christians; and he had made up his mind to see if he could not catch and paint the evil spirits in the faces of his brothers and sister, and he would get his sister to paint his.

At unsuspecting times he caught the expressions of anger, malice, and of any and all other wrong feelings. But he found it hard to catch the wrong side of his brother William's face, he kept himself so well under control. In times of despondency he caught the expressions of distrust and gloom. Little Mae was a puzzle to him. She was so beautiful, and lovely, that it required keen perception to discern and copy the delicate lines of expression which were making their sad inroads upon her lovely face. He could hardly interpret what they meant; but he could copy nature, and he caught the full expressions of her selfish moments.

When Henry had finished his work he gave the pictures to each of his brothers and his sister one Sabbath afternoon, when they were all together in the large sitting room. For a while each looked earnestly at the face in silence; finally little Mae rose, with tears of vexation in her eyes, and asked her mother if she might tear it up. Her mother placed a mirror before her eyes; and after examining her face for some time she went and thanked her brother for his kind, faithful work.

Their father had taught them that ugliness usually indicates a wrong condition of the heart, and is the natural expression of ugliness

of the soul. There are plain, homely faces which are not ugly, because they are lighted by true and kind hearts. All such feelings as anger, malice, discontent and pride deform the face and make it ugly. Passions and vice, and crimes imprint themselves on the faces of their victims, and manifest the demons which dwell within. While intelligence, love, purity and godliness impress themselves upon the face and give a beauty all their own.

When William had studied well the expressions of his face, he said: "I am ashamed of that face, and sorry I must own it as my own. There is doubt and distrust in it. I know that my faith was weak sometimes, and I felt discouraged; but never dreamed that I had ever given over so completely to gloomy doubts. I will remember that Christ says, 'I am with you always,' and 'My grace is sufficient for you,' and his strength is made perfect in our weakness. I will rest upon his keeping power, and go in the strength of the Lord. When I remember the evils of my own nature, I thank God for the victory in Christ."

Little Mae turned to William and thanked him for reminding her of the source of strength and victory. She too had realized her own weakness and inability to contend with the evils without and within, but was sure that by abiding in Christ, she would be able by His help to overcome. Her brother Tom said: "How strange that pride, and selfishness, and other evil feelings can grow up into our lives, and envelop our very souls without our real-

izing it. We are often perfectly ignorant of the manner of Spirit we are of, while those around us may know it, and be pained and troubled by it. The Bible teaches us to put off the old man with his deeds of anger, wrath, malice, pride and such like, and to put on the new man with the fruit of the Spirit, as love, joy, peace and all the others which make us like our Lord. Oh, how sadly I have come short of this duty!"

Henry had carefully examined the sketch prepared by Mae, by the help of her father, as she could invent rather than imitate; and was deeply impressed by what he read in the face. It indicated that he might as well have been made of marble as of human clay, only there was intellect in it. All the tender warmer feelings were wanting. Unloved and unloving! Seeing, and yet never tasting the blessings of unselfish love! It was truly a sad lot, to go through life as a mere machine to copy and interpret nature, without heart enough to enjoy the higher pleasure of unselfish love. He was overpowered by these thoughts, as he expressed them more to himself than to the others, and laid his head upon his mother's lap and silently wept.

His mother spoke in a low sweet voice, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Love is of God, and all who are born of God love God, and his people. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness and kindness. We must cultivate these fruits of the Spirit in our lives

by yielding ourselves up to the leading of the Spirit. Jesus says, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love." "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." The Holy Spirit plants love in our hearts by regeneration, and it is an evidence of our new birth; because, 'He that loveth is born of God,' and 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, when you have love one for another.' This love like all the experiences of the Christian, is susceptible of increase, or decrease. Some forsake their first love, and the love of others grow cold, because iniquity abounds; so we are commanded to follow after love.

"The Bible tells us of this love which is imparted by the Holy Spirit. 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love I am become as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth

not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never fails. Follow after love.' ”

The children had all gathered around her while she talked, and as she ceased to speak, they stood looking at each other in silence. Finally Tom said: “How strange that all our evil habits, feelings and doings should spring from the lack of proper love to God and to each other! Love seeks not her own, but is unselfish; is not puffed up with pride, does not vaunt itself, and is not provoked to anger; but is kind, forbearing, trusting, hopeful, is patient and enduring. Just the thing that each of us needs is more of this love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.”

“More of the Spirit of Christ,” said William, “who pleased not himself, but came into the world to seek and save the lost, and gave his life a ransom for our sins, and redeemed us with his blood, that he might purify us, and make us a peculiar people, that we might show forth his praise.”

Little Mae said: “Without love we are nothing; and all that we can possibly do will profit us nothing. Without love all that we can say is as a sounding brass! There is nothing so empty and worthless as a heart and life of selfishness, where there is no pure love. People are great only as their hearts, and lives, and works are filled with love; and all of our lives and works are valuable only as they are filled with this pure unselfish love.”

Henry's face brightened, and he said: "It is love that lights up the soul, warms up the heart, and finds out God in the world, and the more love of God we have in our hearts, the more we will love His people and what He loves."

"Yes," said William, "what we all need is that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and the depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fullness of God."

In order to manifest the effect of vice and virtue upon the face, and show the great possibilities of the face to be effected by either, Henry had determined to sketch the ugliest, and also the most beautiful faces with which he met.

The first was the face of a woman who had lived a selfish, ungodly life, full of bitter hatred and deep revenge. He had seen her face while filled with fierce anger and intense hatred. It was fearful to look upon. Expressions of horror were heard from all present, and they agreed that if there were any more ugly than it, they did not wish to see them. "This face was once beautiful," said Henry, "as a photograph in the corner will show. What terrible effects sin can produce, and what ruin it can work upon the soul and body."

They passed to the other side of the room and he uncovered the other, and exclamations

of praise and delight were heard from the whole company. Little Mae held a mirror before her mother's eyes, and said: "See, mother, it is perfectly true to nature!" But her mother's eyes were too full of tears to make the proof. Henry was sure he had never seen anything half so beautiful and lovely as that dear face.

His father said: "This is what grace, love, faith and obedience to what Jesus says, can do in producing beauty of character and loveliness of face."

The mother kissed her son and said: "Whatever beautiful and lovely traits of character have been developed in my life, I owe under divine grace to your father's influence, and cultivation. When he found me here teaching I was in a fair way to grow ugly. That other face was once thought to be far more beautiful than mine; and she was regarded as the most beautiful woman in the town. I had grown distrustful and rebellious in spirit. Love was gradually losing out of my heart, and hatred taking its place. I had a picture taken at that time, and was offended with the artist because I thought it so poor a likeness. But he assured me that I was run down by over work in the school room, and he would take another when I had brightened up in vacation. I kept this as a reminder of those dark days, and you can see from it how surely I was in the way to utter ugliness."

It was a picture of Mae, but sadly unlike her beautiful and lovely face. The discontent

and self will of the one gave no promise of the sweet, unselfish, loving and lovely face of the other. One spoke to you of discontent, unhappiness and misery; while the other spoke of love, joy and the sweet peace which comes only to those who by faith and obedience live close to the Lord.

Little Mae put her arms about her mother, saying: "I am so glad you showed me that picture, mother! I never once thought that you ever had any struggle to live right! It seemed always so easy for you to do right, that I was sometimes caused to fear that I was no Christian. But I see now that without Christ we can do nothing, and by faith we may draw from Him all we need."

Some time after this, Alice Green, a young member of Tom's church, came to Mae for advice in her time of trouble. Between sobs she said to Mae: "I need a Christian mother's advice and guidance. My own mother is not a Christian, and can advise me only as to the things of this present world."

Mae told her she had already given her a mother's love and sympathy, and would be glad to give her a Christian mother's advice.

Alice told her that she had loved her as if she were her own mother, and came to her because she knew she would sympathize with her. A young friend of hers had sought her heart and hand in marriage. A strong attachment had grown up between them, and she feared that she could never be a true and worthy companion for him. He was full of

strong impulses, and fervor of feeling, while her own nature was deep and undemonstrative. She feared that he might be disappointed in her, doubt the strength of her love, and their lives and home be thus made unhappy.

Mae put her arms about Alice and kissed her tenderly, and said: "Before marriage the parties should understand each other thoroughly, and leave nothing to bring dissatisfaction after marriage, and in all cases where true happiness is found, they must both possess that true love, that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, and never fails. This love 'seeks not its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil, suffers long and is kind.' If the husband has this kind of love for the wife, he will find his greatest pleasure in her happiness. True love thinks no evil, is not provoked, seeks not its own. It is not selfish, but kind, thoughtful and tender in all it does; and it takes no account of the failures, but passes them by with due allowance. Where such love as this exists it speaks in the tones of the voice, expressions of the face, acts of life, and in the small, as well as the most important affairs of the home.

"When love of this kind rules the lives of all, and when Christ is loved and obeyed, the home cannot fail to be happy; and without it, no home of any kind can be truly happy. Even a small degree of selfishness in one or both parties will destroy much of the happiness of the entire home. Deep and earnest piety alone can free the life from the defects of selfishness.

"Love seems to spring up unbidden in the heart, and is susceptible of cultivation, or repression. Its growth and development depends largely upon the condition of the heart in which it grows, as well as the cultivation it receives. Like the burning flames, on the hearth, it must be constantly fed by pure, kind and unselfish acts, to keep it burning warm and bright. Here is to be found the mistake of many homes; love is left to burn and to smoulder under the accumulated heaps of unkind and selfish words, acts, and neglects of a lifetime, while self-sacrifice and kindness are unknown in the home. Selfishness and self-love bring discontent, and afford happiness for only short periods of time. 'The full soul loathes the honey comb,' and 'the spoiled child is hard to please'; so selfish natures are hard to please, and a selfish home grows more unhappy as the days go by."

In the Bethel-home there had been a constant supply of fuel added to the fires of love, and the flames had grown brighter all the while. Their love for each other had increased more and more, and they were dearer to each other now than they were when the home was first built. They lived for their Lord and for each other, and their home was the brightest and best place in the world to them. Their deep love and obedience to God, and their abiding love for each other banished selfishness and drew them close together in the home.

They had early developed in their children this same love for each other, and it had

repressed the development of selfishness, unkindness, and disregard for the feelings and rights of others. They had been taught that it is unkind and wrong to force our angry feelings and ugly tempers upon our friends and loved ones. The feelings, rights and privileges of the family are to be held as sacred as those of others; and true courtesy, the result of genuine love, must be manifested at all times. Even to thoughtlessly wound the tenderest feeling or sentiment of others was regarded as gross injustice, and a sin against the Lord. They had taught the children from early infancy the true principles of Christianity, and after they had become Christians, they developed readily under the loving instructions and influences of the home.



CHAPTER XXII.

The Ideal Christian Life.

Tom had preached from the text, "Ye are complete in Him," and the family in the Beth-el-home were talking of the wonderful riches of grace, and the fullness of blessings believers have in Christ. They spoke of the infinite fullness of life, grace, worthiness, wisdom and power of Christ, which all believers may receive through faith, as they have need. Being united to Christ by a living faith, and being one with Him, they live by His life, are righteous in His righteousness, are strong in His strength, and are worthy in His worthiness. He is made unto them all things; and by an abiding faith, and loving obedience to all His words, they are, through the Holy Spirit, to grow up into Christ in all things.

Mae said: "You spoke today of God's ideal of Christian lives as set forth in the great possibilities and promises of the Bible. Tell us what you understand this ideal to be."

Tom stated that in order to be a Christian at all the sinner must be made a new creature in Christ by the new birth, and saved by grace through faith in Christ. Being justified by faith he has peace with God; and the Holy Spirit testifies with his spirit that he is a child of God. Yet he is a babe in Christ, and susceptible of growth into a full man in Christ. By the new birth the believer is brought into a living union with Christ through faith, and receives of His infinite fullness, and is made

complete in Him. Christ is his life and he lives by Him, is made righteous in His righteousness, strong in His strength and has full access to the Father in Christ and His worthiness.

Also through this union with Christ the believer is made free from condemnation, love and dominion of sin. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ;" "for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." He was made under the law and obeyed it perfectly for us, and then by death He suffered the punishment of our sins. In this way He provided a righteousness for us, in which we are fully and forever free from the condemnation of sin when we believe in Him.

By union with Christ the believer is also freed from the love of sin. While the new birth does not remove the old fleshly nature, it imparts a new nature, which loves God and holiness, and hates sin. It is in full accord with Christ and the will of God; and there is perpetual warfare between these two natures in every believer's life. But the love of sin is gone, and it can not hold dominion over them; because they are not under the law, but under grace, and through the Spirit may mortify the deeds of the flesh and live. They are largely freed, or may be, from the commission of sin by the new birth, in which the Holy Spirit wrote the holy law of God in their

minds and upon their hearts. They do not want any other God; even if there were other true Gods. The name of God their Father in heaven, who loved them and gave His Son to die for them, is too holy and precious to be used in vain; and Christ, who loved them and died under their sins, and the Holy Spirit, the loving Comforter, who made them new creatures and sealed them unto the day of redemption, are far too precious for the use of their holy names in vain.

Mae said: "Yes, the love for the brethren in the hearts of Christians, which works no ill to its neighbor, but is kind, bears all things, seeks not its own, is not provoked, prevents the Christian from doing harm to others. It is not the commands against wrong doing, which restrain them; but, love in their new nature, leads them to good instead of evil. Love fulfills the law, and removes much of the practice of sin; but the old fleshly nature, the carnal mind which is enmity to God, prevents the Christian from being entirely free from all practice of sin. This fleshly mind, the 'sin that dwells in me, pollutes all that it touches, even the best thoughts, feelings and acts of their lives need by faith to be washed in the precious blood of Christ to make them fit for the Lord's use."

William said: "I have thought much about your statement today that Paul's prayers for Christians indicate the great possibilities of growth in Christian lives. 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,

may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power towards us who believe. Also, 'That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.'"

Tom said that there are great and wonderful possibilities of growth and attainment indicated by all the prayers in the Bible; and the Lord has given to His Church His spiritual body, the Word of God, in the hands of pastors and teachers, "for the perfecting of the saints, till we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." "Speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is Head, even Christ."

The Word of God is the one essential to be employed by Christians in attaining this growth. Not speaking the truth only; but knowing, believing, loving, and living the truth; being true through loving obedience and

conformity to the true Word of God. If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him." The Christian can grow up into Christ in all things only by abiding in Him by faith, as the branch in the vine, and by letting the words of Christ abide in him, richly, by full, loving obedience to it. The Holy Spirit, if yielded to, will lead them by the Word of God into the knowledge of all truth; and through belief and obedience to it will enable them to grow up into Christ.

The ideal Christian life, as set forth in the Bible, is to come into the "perfecting of the saints," "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," to "grow up into Christ in all things," to "be filled with all the fulness of God." Paul understood it when he said, "For me to live is Christ." "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." To the extent that Christ lives in us, and works through us, and to the extent the Holy Spirit makes us like Christ; to that extent will we live ideal Christian lives.

It is vain to expect this growth apart from obedience to the commands of Christ. The condition is faith in Christ, and full loving obedience to His commands. It is the new creature living by faith in Christ, receiving

continually from His infinite fullness all he needs. Also yielding himself up to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, governed by the Word of God in all he believes and does, lovingly obeying Christ in every thing. This is God's condition for attaining the fuller growth in Christian life and character, and the means of obtaining God's ideal Christian life as set forth in the Bible.

Here we leave Tom successful and happy in his work, surrounded by love in his sweet Bethel-home, seeking to attain the very highest possible ideal Christian life here, and expecting to awake, at the resurrection, in the perfect likeness of Christ, his body fashioned after the glorious body of Christ, and to live an absolutely sinless and perfect life with Christ in eternal glory. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Jesus Christ. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor, and glory forever and ever. Amen."

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